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# WILHELM DILTHEY

## AN INTRODUCTION

by

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## INTRODUCTION

This is the first book on Wilhelm Dilthey to be published in England. It is overdue. This German philosopher, hardly known in this country, has been a growing influence in his own since the beginning of the present century, and his work deserves attention both for its inherent good sense and also for the freshness of his themes. For Dilthey is an innovator and a pioneer. Many of the issues which he raises were implicit in the position reached by German philosophy before his time, but it is he who has drawn them together and revealed their full extent and meaning. Philosophy in the English-speaking world has hardly trodden these paths at all, and British and American readers will find much here that is novel and challenging.

Dilthey's life was uneventful. Born in 1833 at Biebrich am Rhein, near Mainz, the son of a pastor of the Reformed Church, he intended at first to follow the same vocation, but, like so many of the great German philosophers, found while a student that his real bent lay elsewhere. He obtained his Doctorate at Berlin in 1864, and in 1867 became Professor of Philosophy at Basel, where for a year he was a colleague of Jakob Burckhardt. Then he moved to Kiel (1868), then to Breslau (1871), and finally in 1882 to Berlin, where he remained until his death in 1911. His mind matured slowly. The trend of his interests and purposes was manifest from the start, and the main lines of what was to be his great work, his *Critique of Historical Reason*, were established as early as 1880 ; but the execution was attended by so many delays and side-excursions that death overtook him with the great work still unfinished, though ample material had been accumulated, which has been arranged and published by his literary executors. Through a literary veil in some ways uninviting it is possible to discern a philosophy of real originality, depth, and power.

It is a "critical" philosophy in the Kantian sense, i.e. a philosophy devoted principally to questions of epistemology and logic, the latter term being taken to cover the methodology of the sciences. In this respect it agrees with what has been a dominant tradition in Anglo-Saxon thought all through modern

times, but in detail the questions which he raises are of a kind hardly faced by philosophers in the Anglo-Saxon world.

To such readers the most novel and striking thing will probably be his delicate and detailed analysis of the process of *understanding* (*das Verstehen*) whereby we come to know our own mental life and that of others. This is a side of epistemology which has been steadily neglected since the very earliest times. Philosophers have devoted endless trouble to discussing how we come to be aware of physical objects and how far subjective elements enter into our experience of them. They have talked as if our world consisted entirely of such objects, and as if the knowledge of them were our chief intellectual concern. Yet the most significant of our experiences lie in our relations with other people, and the nature and extent of the knowledge which we can have of other people is a question of equal importance with the first. Dilthey is the first philosopher in any country to tackle the question seriously and systematically, and his work has started a new movement in German thought.

From this follow naturally the various contributions which Dilthey makes to the study of methodology. Thus he has made clear, as it was never made clear before, the distinctive character of the *Geisteswissenschaften* or human studies, showing on the one hand that their aims, presuppositions, and methods are not those of the natural sciences, and on the other that in spite of this they are not a mere welter of subjective impressions, but have rigorous methods and controls of their own. It is much to be regretted that "science" in English usually means "natural science", and that the logicians have yielded to this prejudice by taking the exact sciences as the model of empirical investigation and drawing principles and illustrations almost wholly from them. *Wissenschaft* in German has the proper sense of any methodical pursuit of knowledge.

He has understood and made clear that there can be a kind of history which is not merely a history of institutions, but of the minds of men, a *Geistesgeschichte*; and that this is not the intuitive but chancy interpretation which we often get from a novelist, but a genuine intellectual discipline. Likewise in psychology and in sociology he has helped us to see that learning can be scientific without ceasing to be humane. Such writers as Simmel, Tröltsch, and Max Weber owe much to his spadework.

Going deeper on the same lines, he has warned psychology, sociology, and philosophy alike of a truth which they have often ignored—that though in a sense they have to study the nature of man, yet this nature can never be adequately expressed in fixed formulæ, because man is part of the stream of history, and human nature is itself a changing product of changing conditions. In this sense all our knowledge of man, whether in the positive human studies or in philosophy, depends on historical knowledge and is an outgrowth from that stem. This is not unlike what R. G. Collingwood has been trying to say in recent years.

Going deeper still, Dilthey touches the foundations of logic and metaphysics by his analysis of the conditions which determine the formation of character and outlook. Philosophy has traditionally recognized in certain first principles of absolute generality the foundations on which all knowledge and belief are based. To take these principles for granted as true and to work them up into a coherent picture of the skeleton structure of reality is to be a metaphysician. To enquire into the grounds on which our acceptance of the principles can be justified is to be a “critical” philosopher in Kant’s sense. What Dilthey has done is to show that the principles themselves do not form a single coherent system, that there are alternative sets of them, and that each set represents the way in which a particular type of mind views the world, a way which depends as much on affective and volitional factors as on intellectual considerations. This leads to a radical relativism, of which Dilthey is not afraid, because he has faced it and begun to see that even this does not mean the end of knowledge, though it means readjustment of some of its claims, especially the claims traditionally made by philosophy. This opens up a wide field which Dilthey himself did not fully explore, but in which others have been active in and since his time. Again it has something in common with the recent teaching of R. G. Collingwood.

Dilthey is in all this a true successor of Kant and Hegel, a truer successor than many who have clung more closely to the actual words and doctrines of these masters. For Kant and Hegel are transition-points, they represent the break-up of old habits of thought and the coming of new problems and methods, but it remains for us to tread their road to the end. German

philosophy in the last hundred years has been attempting to do this, while philosophy in Britain and elsewhere was still worrying about whether Berkeley proves his point or whether Kant refuted Hume. This study of Dilthey will be worth while if it helps to bridge the gap between British traditionalism and German radicalism in the pursuit of philosophy.

My thanks are due especially to the Master of Balliol, who introduced me to Dilthey's writings eighteen years ago and guided my early studies in this field ; to Dr. Karl Mannheim, without whose encouragement this book would not have been written ; and to the Rev. Fr. Edward, O.S.B., for permission to incorporate several passages from a series of articles on Dilthey which I contributed several years ago to *Laudate*. Generous help has also been received from Dr. G. Misch, who read the book in proof and made many useful comments and suggestions. The debt of the bibliography to him is especially great.

H. A. HODGES.

# I

Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) is a significant and influential figure in the history of German thought. Born two years after the death of Hegel, and dying three years before the outbreak of the Four Years' War, he spans the generations between the post-Napoleonic Restoration and the onset of the present world disturbances. He carried over something of the spirit of the age of romanticism into the age of scientific humanism, and brought the enthusiasm of Goethe into the midst of the bewilderment of the twentieth century. He was twenty-one at the time of Schelling's death, twenty-seven at Schopenhauer's. His life-time includes the entire career of Nietzsche and the publication of all the writings of Marx. He lived to read and discuss F. H. Bradley and William James, Bergson and Husserl, and to inspire a multitude of writers now living. Politically, he saw the work of Bismarck begun and ended, he saw the building up of Germany from a loose confederacy of States into a military empire which threatened the peace of Europe.

The age through which he lived had an inner unity ; it was the age in which Europe at large became aware of a challenge to its traditions and a growing uneasiness about the future. The social structure, already shaken by the impact of the French Revolution, was further threatened by the consequences of the Industrial Revolution. Great masses of population were growing up with little attachment to existing social traditions and little reason to respect them. Their lives were dominated by the competitive spirit of industry, which left them little time and no background for the cultivation of the mind. Their influence was felt in literature, a debasing influence as Dilthey thought, in the coming of writers like Dickens, who were of this new urban public and wrote for it, sacrificing formal and constructive values for the sake of sentimental effect. The older cultivated classes felt a challenge to their existence and their way of life and thought, not only from the new public spawned by industry, but also from among themselves. The Christian mythology, which had served as a framework for the thoughts of Europe since St. Augustine, had been quietly set aside in the eighteenth century. The



humanist philosophy which succeeded it was already showing its inability to produce agreement among its own exponents, to create or maintain a common body of convictions. Behind the façade of scientific progress, and partly because of it, all deeply reflective minds in the nineteenth century were disquieted.

The problem was both more and less urgent in Britain than on the Continent; more so, because the Industrial Revolution was further advanced here, and less so, in that the Christian tradition was more deeply rooted and there still seemed to be a chance of saving it. This determines the form of the question as it appears in a series of British poets and prose writers of the period: what are we to make of the universe and how are we to conceive our place in it, in the light of our growing scientific knowledge? By some this question was linked with a concern about the social and cultural effects of industrialization, and so took on a different form: how can life be made really worth living in the new world of science and machinery? This is the problem of Ruskin and William Morris.

For Dilthey, writing in Germany, the problem had a different shape from either of these. The Christian tradition was for him less in the centre of the picture. Though brought up in the Reformed Church and partly trained for its ministry, he found much in historic Christianity which was uncongenial, especially the otherworldliness of its outlook. His own ideals were Lessing and Goethe, the apostles of romantic humanism. To this, rather than to Christianity, he felt a threat in the prevailing spirit of contemporary science. He was aware of the Industrial Revolution, but it did not dominate his conception of the social problem. What was central in his view was the omniscient State of modern times, and over against it the social instability manifested in the revolutionary movements of the nineteenth century. He declared that the vital question of to-day is the problem of understanding and guiding the turbulent forces at work in modern society. He clung to the belief that the benevolent bureaucracy of Prussia could be combined with the romantic freedom of personal development.

Dilthey's philosophy results from the mingling of two influences, both of eighteenth-century origin, and both concerned with the study of human mind and society. The one is the empirical philosophy whose home was Britain and France. The

other is the transcendental philosophy of the post-Kantian period in Germany.

At the root of the empirical philosophy of Locke and Hume lies an impatience with the inconclusive debates of metaphysics and a confidence in the power of experimental science to do better. They thought it their mission to examine the nature of thought and language in order to expose all meaningless terminology and futile speculation, and to lay firmly in the soil of experience the foundations of scientific method. This meant concentrating their energies upon psychological questions almost to the exclusion of questions about the nature of being; and if they had been told that they would end by reducing philosophy to a kind of applied psychology, Hume at least would have felt no alarm. In the Preface to his *Treatise of Human Nature*—a manifesto not less significant than Kant's Introduction to the *Critique of Pure Reason*—he set out a plan for the reconstruction of the whole edifice of knowledge on the basis of a psychology, itself newly constructed by the application of the experimental method. All questions of logic and methodology, of moral and political theory, of aesthetics, even of natural religion, could be dealt with by this instrument. A line of philosophers in Great Britain followed up this programme, down to J. S. Mill, whose *System of Logic* (1843) had an international reputation in its time, and affected Dilthey in his formative years. The last notable representative of the school, Alexander Bain, died as recently as 1903: and to-day the revival of interest in Hume himself testifies to the continued vitality of his standpoint.

What attracted Dilthey in these philosophers was on the one hand their distrust of speculative theories and their faith in empirical methods, and on the other hand their conviction that the central concern of the philosopher should be the study of man and society. Both these lessons were being proclaimed in his early years by a yet more powerful voice in France. The British empirical philosophy, introduced into France by Voltaire, was crystallized into a new and original form by Auguste Comte, whose *Cours de philosophie positive* (1830-42) set going a movement which is still vigorous in France and elsewhere. Comte did not merely proclaim the value and analyse the methods of empirical or, as he called it, positive science. He put it into a wider context, and gave an intelligible account of its relation to

metaphysical speculation, by his doctrine of the three stages through which human thought has had to pass. He showed the theological way of conceiving things giving way gradually to the metaphysical, and this in turn being replaced by the positive outlook, which is alone capable of yielding genuine knowledge. He codified the logical relations between the various sciences, and showed how the progress of one depends upon progress having been previously made in another, and so explained why the positive outlook has appeared in them not simultaneously, but in a necessarily determined order of time. He added that the establishment of the positive method in the study of man and society had not yet been accomplished, and that it was his mission to accomplish it. Declaring that psychology, the study of the individual mind, can never become a science, and differing strikingly in this respect from the British school, he laid down the programme for a "sociology," an empirical or positive science of humanity in its social groupings. The British school themselves were influenced by this. J. S. Mill, while holding firmly to the belief in the centrality of psychology, found a place for sociology in his system of sciences. Herbert Spencer developed sociology very far, and in Great Britain his influence has been determinative, while Comte is hardly read or known. In France, however, the two sides of Comte's teaching are alive and influential to-day. His doctrine of positive method has inspired a school of writers on the philosophy of the sciences, while a sociology conceived in his terms and inspired by his teaching is an important element in French education.

Dilthey's attitude to Comte was twofold. He was fascinated by the clarity with which the Frenchman had described the positive method in the natural sciences, and the precision with which he had assigned to each of them its place in a logical edifice which explained their mutual relations and their history. He was equally convinced that Comte was wrong about the study of man. It was not merely that Comte was wrong in excluding the possibility of a scientific psychology, and the British school right in affirming it. Dilthey believed that they and Comte were alike wrong in assuming that the methods and presuppositions of the natural sciences could be transferred substantially unchanged to the human studies. In the latter field the conditions of observation and experiment are very different, and even the

kind of questions which we are concerned to ask are not altogether the same as in the natural sciences. These differences are bound to be reflected in the methods and logical structure of the human studies, and in the course of their historical development. Dilthey set himself the task of making clear what the difference was, and so exhibiting the distinctive character of the human studies. He was the better able to conceive and execute this task because of the other influences which blended with those of the Anglo-French empiricists in his mind.

The "critical" philosophy of Kant is not, at least ostensibly, a psychological study such as Hume undertook; but it had a like effect in reducing philosophy to a study of the human mind, its activities and forms of experience. This revolutionary change coincided in date with a double movement of thought which made the years between 1770 and 1830 in Germany a period of concentrated intellectual activity such as has probably no parallel anywhere in modern history. 1. On the one hand there was the romantic movement, which in Germany, as in Britain, but to an even greater extent, was no mere change of literary fashions and styles, but the proclamation of a new philosophy, challenging the jejune rationalism of the eighteenth century with a new conception of man and the world. Coleridge in England united first-class poetic genius and critical ability with a real grasp of deep philosophical issues, and in him and Wordsworth and Shelley the spirit of Platonism broods over English romanticism. In Germany Goethe and Schiller, to name only the two greatest, combined poetic genius with philosophical interests in such a way that each drew support from the other. Schiller adopted in essentials the philosophy of Kant. Goethe worked out a philosophy of a new type which Dilthey calls "evolutionary pantheism", the doctrine of a universal mind which, unconscious at first in nature, struggles towards consciousness in the animal world and reaches self-consciousness in man. Both found in the creative imagination of the artist a reflection of that power which underlies all the phenomena of nature and history. 2. At the same time there was also going on in Germany an intellectual revolution comparable with that which we associate with the names of Galileo and Bacon. This was a revolution not in natural science, but in historical study, and it meant that history itself acquired a consciousness of method and direction which

transformed it into a progressive science, while kindred studies such as philology, archaeology, anthropology, comparative mythology, sprang into life to support it and feed it with facts and principles. A new intellectual world came into being over against the world of the natural sciences, a world where nature is only the environment, and human action the central fact.—All these influences blended in the post-Kantian philosophy. In Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel the transcendental philosophy of Kant, the romantic faith in the creative powers of man and his close kinship with the world spirit, and the new vision of cultural and social development in human history, came together into a brilliant though short-lived unity.

In Dilthey's generation the unity was already breaking up. A strong reaction had set in against metaphysical speculation. Materialism and positivism were coming into vogue. A cry was raised for a return to Kant : not the Kant of the second and third Critiques, who had inspired Fichte and his successors, but the positivist Kant of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Dilthey shared in the reaction, but at the same time had a deep sympathy for the romantic ideal of life and art, and a comprehension of the historical movement, which made it impossible to write off the post-Kantians as his contemporaries were doing. He wished to do with them as Dr. I. A. Richards has recently done with Coleridge, accepting and developing his psychology and aesthetic while explaining his metaphysics away. Dilthey shows no trace of the influence of that Hegelian Left, represented by Feuerbach and Marx, which found it possible to discard Hegel's idealism while retaining his dialectic. He joined in the cry for a return to Kant, but insisted on the whole Kant, the man who not only analysed the presuppositions of natural science and showed its powers and its limitations, but also pointed beyond it to the moral, aesthetic, and religious consciousness which is the root of metaphysics, even while he showed that metaphysics as a branch of knowledge is a vain dream. By doing all this, Kant set the problem for subsequent philosophers : to retain the deepest understanding of the moral, aesthetic, and religious elements in experience, while redeeming them from speculative interpretations and making them the object of empirical scientific study. It was the problem which the historical movement was solving in practice, and the task of philosophy as Dilthey saw it was to

work out the epistemological and logical foundations of the historical studies and build these into the Kantian structure, side by side with Kant's own epistemology and logic of the natural sciences.

Of the post-Kantians themselves, one stood out in his mind above the rest—Schleiermacher, whom he had met in the course of his early theological studies, and who continued to fascinate him throughout his life. His analysis of the religious consciousness, his conception of the dialectical relation between universal type and individual instance, and most of all his famous hermeneutic, or theory of the principles of understanding and interpretation, remained familiar themes in Dilthey's own philosophy, where the two latter have a fundamental importance. One of Dilthey's best-known works is his *Life of Schleiermacher*, a monumental achievement even though he did not live to finish it. Only in his last years, after 1900, did Dilthey give equally sympathetic attention to Hegel, but when he did so, he found in him, too, a great deal to admire.

Dilthey was fully aware of his dependence on these two main sources, the Anglo-French empiricism and the German blend of Kant with romanticism and the historical movement. He believed that each had faults which could be cured by combining it with the other, and that the union of these two traditions, so disparate and yet alike in making man their central object of study, was the peculiar task of the nineteenth century. In his own philosophy their union is carried far, but not so far that their tension is overcome, and there are points where he failed to reconcile the two sides of himself, and therefore failed to produce a coherent doctrine. He was right, however, in thinking that the two traditions need one another, and that each is strong where the other is weak. The empiricists are strong in their refusal to indulge in speculative theories, their determination to be scientific and realistic, and their successful attempt to make their knowledge a force for social reform, as in the outstanding instance of the philosophical radicals. They fail in their understanding of the deeper levels of experience. The Kantian-romantic-historical tradition has this understanding, but is apt to run off into speculation instead of girding itself for action. Dilthey repeats with approval Carlyle's characterization of it in the typical figure of Diogenes Teufelsdröckh, the Professor without

a pupil, who sits in his tower and meditates on things in general, or descends only to utter cryptic epigrams in the *Grüne Gans*.<sup>1</sup> To give Bentham the wisdom of Goethe, and Goethe the practical genius of Bentham, would be the ideal.

Dilthey is one of those philosophers who are drawn to philosophy not only by the direct study of it, but also by questions which arise in their study of other things. His interests ranged widely. In particular he was so deeply interested in history, and wrote so much on historical and biographical subjects, that to many people he is better known as a historian than as a philosopher. It was not political and institutional history that he wrote, but the history of ideas: history of the Renaissance and the Reformation, of various stages in the development of European and especially German thought and culture from this period to the age of the post-Kantians. His *Life of Schleiermacher* and his *Early Life of Hegel* belong to this historical category of writing as much as to the strictly philosophic, and together with his *Conception and Analysis of Human Nature in the 15th and 16th Centuries* and other essays they have given him a secure reputation in this field of learning. His writings on the Renaissance and the subsequent centuries show a great interest in the attempt then made to establish a rational anthropology or doctrine of the nature of man, and to discover a natural law which might be the basis for a generally agreed moral and political system. He also traces through the same period the development of hermeneutics, the art and science of interpretation which, arising in antiquity and kept alive by the Church, came to maturity in Schleiermacher, who generalized it and made it an integral part of ordinary epistemology and logic.

With this interest in history went an interest in the fine arts, especially in poetry and music. This was, however, a philosopher's or a historian's interest in art rather than that of an artist. It was less concerned with technique and formal values than with the content expressed in the work of art, and its significance as a revelation of the mind of man in general and of particular ages and cultures. It found an outlet in numbers of historical and critical essays, in most of which the historical or biographical interest is well to the fore, and in several works on aesthetics, which concern themselves with the

<sup>1</sup> *Gesammelte Schriften*, IV, 507 ff.

psychological mechanism of artistic creativity and the social and intellectual influence of the arts. This side of his work naturally shows close links with his interest in hermeneutics.

In view of Dilthey's interest in historical and social questions, the British reader will probably learn with surprise that he wrote only one short book on ethics, and nothing at all devoted specifically to what in this country is called political theory. This was not due to indifference, but to a feeling that much spadework remained to be done about the foundations on which any future moral and political theory would have to rest. In an age when scientific method was being brought over from the natural sciences and acclimatized in the human studies, it seemed to him that the rough-and-ready introspective psychology, eked out by metaphysical abstractions, which is the stock-in-trade of so many moral and political theorists, was becoming out of date, and that what was needed was a thorough grounding in psychology and social science before the attempt was made even to formulate the questions in the moral and political field. Dilthey never supposed that he himself had done the necessary spadework. He thought that he had blazed a trail which others would be able to follow to the end. This was a just estimate of his achievement. In moral and political theory he appears not as the prophet of a particular doctrine, but as the forerunner and inspirer of a movement from which light has come in various ways. He is Socrates rather than Plato.

In his early years Dilthey was very conscious of isolation in his philosophical work. He was asking questions which ran counter to prevailing habits of thought, trying to unite elements from mutually hostile traditions, and antagonizing each by questioning what it held to be axiomatic. He writes of himself as "moving in an unknown country",<sup>1</sup> as working towards a new way of philosophizing, and indeed he was one of those who have dared to call in question not this or that philosophical opinion, but the future of philosophy itself. His writings of all periods show traces of attempts to find common ground with contemporary movements, some of which were only verbally in unison with him, while none shared his vision of the amplitude of the task to be done. Once he suffered the mortification of being attacked with violence and contempt by a psychologist with

<sup>1</sup> *Briefwechsel Dilthey-Yorck*, p. 102.



whom he had thought himself to be in agreement. In his later years the intellectual climate changed, and before he died he saw the questions which he had raised being taken up seriously by other philosophers, and a group of pupils gathered round himself who promised to continue the work which he had begun.

Since that time, at least until the Nazi purge of German thought, his influence has continued to grow in various directions. His hermeneutic, his psychological and sociological programme, his conceptions of life, history, culture, have all proved fruitful and have become starting-points for work by later writers. To-day he is recognized as one of the most significant figures in the intellectual world since Hegel, and it is safe to say that no future philosophy can afford to neglect his challenge or to overlook his positive suggestions.

## II

There are many people to-day to whom philosophy means chiefly epistemology and logic ; meaning by epistemology a discussion of how we perceive sensible objects, and in what sense they are really there to be perceived, and by logic a discussion of the general laws of thought and the methods and presuppositions of natural science. Those who seek this kind of thing will not find it in Dilthey. Our knowledge of the physical world is discussed in his works, but it is not a major issue there. His view on the matter (which is positivist or phenomenalist) might be overthrown, and yet leave all his main contentions standing. Methodology plays a large part in his work, but it is not the methodology of natural science. It is the methodology of the human studies, and it is his first concern to insist that the two are different.

This is not an attack on natural science, of the kind sometimes made by theologians, philosophers, or artists who think to enhance their own intellectual prestige by decrying someone else. It is an empirical observation based upon two sets of facts : that the empiricists and positivists, who tried to transfer the procedures of natural science to the human studies with a minimum of modification, had obtained results in economics and psychophysics, but had failed to penetrate the significance of the higher imaginative and intellectual activities, while the romantic and historical school, who had spoken to the purpose on these latter activities, had gone about it by methods developed from the independent study of their material.

If methods differ from one enquiry to another, that is because we are working with different kinds of evidence, and that again is because not all kinds of objects are accessible to us in the same way. Other people's minds are not known to us in exactly the same way as our own, and neither are known to us in the same way as physical things. In this way what begins as a study of methodological differences leads us back to epistemology, and Dilthey has to investigate the nature of the difference between our knowledge of minds and our knowledge of physical things. He says a great deal about this in many places, but always insists

that the human studies are knowledge in a sense in which natural science is not, because physical objects as known to us are merely appearances, while minds are "real realities" (*reale Realitäten*), known to us as they are in themselves.

This, again, is not an attempt to deny either the reality of the external world or the real triumphs of natural science in investigating it. There are obvious ways in which we know physical nature better than we know man or society. We can describe and analyse, explain and predict, with far greater precision in the former than in the latter, nor does our knowledge of nature depend in any degree upon human testimony borne by unscientific witnesses. On the other hand—and this is what Dilthey puts in the foreground—we cannot enter into the being of physical things and processes as we can with human beings and societies, where sympathetic insight, based on the identity of nature between ourselves and what we study, enables us to appreciate not only the external movements and changes, but the motives producing them and their meaning for the people concerned. It is this which makes Dilthey call the human studies a knowledge of reality in a sense in which natural science is not, and sets him the task of explaining in detail where the difference lies.

Other philosophers have seen the difference, but have used it only as a stick to beat the natural scientists. Bergson has shown clearly that beyond the analytical intelligence as seen in mathematics and natural science there are other forms of experience which deserve to be called cognitive; but if we ask what these are, the "intuition" which is all he offers turns out to be a rag-bag into which scraps of introspection, art, metaphysics, and religion have been thrown together, and no attempt is made to sort them out. Such failure to work out one's own contention seriously renders the contention worthless. Gentile has made much of the difference between knowing inanimate objects, such as a stone, and knowing "spiritual reality", and has pointed out that the latter process involves a certain "self-identification" of the knowing subject with the object known. But instead of analysing this "self-identificatory" process, he has left it in a metaphorical obscurity which favours his own idealist metaphysic, tacitly suggesting that the accord between two minds of which the one understands the other has something to do with

the transcendental unity of all selves in the One Self, which is his highest metaphysical doctrine. Dilthey was the first writer to set speculative questions aside and study the process of sympathetic understanding soberly and scientifically. He showed how analysis, clear definition, and systematic exploration of the object play a determinative part in it also, as well as in the method of natural science, and that the two methods, though different, are not antithetic.

He begins by pointing out that most of our knowledge of minds, including our own minds, depends on the ways in which they find expression. Between understanding and expression there is a close link, corresponding to that other link which binds together the expression and the experience to which it gives utterance. Every lived experience (*Erlebnis*), every element of cognitive, affective, or conative activity which forms part of the history of a mind, tends to give rise to an expression ; not merely in Croce's sense, i.e., a clarification and definition of feelings and impressions by the formation of precise imagery in the mind, but also and primarily in the ordinary sense of overt expression through word or deed or gesture. There are various types of expression, some automatic and involuntary, others artificial and deliberate ; but it is a fundamental characteristic of mental life that in one way or another it expresses or "objectifies" itself. What does not find overt expression in this way still tends to clothe itself in words or other symbols in the subject's consciousness, and it is common knowledge that we do not think we have really got possession of an idea, or fathomed the depths of our own emotional life, until we have put it into words.

Expression, indeed, is indispensable to self-knowledge, since only by it can our view of ourselves acquire either clarity, or stability, or depth. Introspection unaided by the understanding of expressions is a very blunt tool. The stream of psychic events passes so swiftly, each thought or feeling melting so inexorably into its successor, that it is impossible to get a steady view of what is going on in ourselves. Seeing experiences pass in their fleeting way, not staying to be examined and analysed, we must often be at a loss to describe or classify them accurately. Apart from this, the very act of introspection can pervert the evidence on which it should rely, and we are

apt to find in ourselves the experiences which we come prepared to find.<sup>1</sup>

The way to self-knowledge would be blocked if it were not for the inherent tendency of experience to find expression ; for expression counteracts in large measure the factors which defeat introspection. It reacts upon the experience which it expresses, not normally distorting it, but clarifying it and at the same time keeping it before the mind for a manageable length of time. Thus what direct introspection cannot do, introspection aided by expression can do with some confidence. Add to this that some types of expression give utterance to things which are buried deep down below the threshold of ordinary consciousness, so that what I think and feel is revealed to me first by what I say or do. It thus becomes clear that expression is the basis on which our knowledge even of our own minds is built.

It is even more obvious that expression is the medium through which we know other minds. Introspection is impossible in this case, the mental life of others is not directly accessible to me even in that degree in which my own is, and nothing can make it accessible unless it is conveyed to me by some physical expression which I can perceive and understand. The fact that I can understand an expression when I meet it is due to a curious psychological law, by virtue of which every physical event which expresses an experience in someone's mind has the power, in normal conditions, to evoke a corresponding experience in the mind of an observer. I see a human figure in a downcast attitude, the face marked with tears ; these are the expressions of grief, and I cannot normally perceive them without feeling in myself a reverberation of the grief which they express. Though native to another mind than mine, and forming part of a mental history which is not mine, it none the less comes alive in me, or sets up an image or reproduction of itself (*Nachbild*) in my consciousness. Upon this foundation all my understanding of the other person is built.

This power of expressions to evoke what they express is the basis of all communication and all sharing of experience between

<sup>1</sup> Dilthey gives as an example the question whether my perception of a mountain includes an empathic element. The moment I ask the question, an empathic element is likely to appear, and this is no evidence that it was there before. The writings of certain supporters of the empathic theory of art certainly appear to illustrate and confirm this remark of Dilthey's.

human beings. It is not an inferential process. When I see the grief-stricken figure I do not begin by recognizing the attitude as the attitude typical of grief, and conclude from this that the person before me is experiencing grief. The mere sight of the expression awakens in me an immediate response, not intellectual, but emotional, feeling arouses feeling with no other intermediary than the expression itself. Dilthey remarks that what happens in me on such an occasion is the same as what happens in the other person whom I understand, only as it were in reverse. In him, a lived experience has externalized itself in an expression. In me, a perceived expression has internalized itself in the shape of a *Nachbild* of the experience expressed. Guided by the other person's expression, I live over again (*nacherlebe*) his experience in my own consciousness, and this is the essence of understanding. "To reproduce is to re-live" (*Nachbilden ist eben ein Nacherleben*).<sup>1</sup>

When I thus re-live someone's experience, the *Nachbild* of his experience in my mind both is and is not a part of my own mental history. It is, in the sense that it is I who am conscious of it, it belongs to my unity of apperception. It is not, in the sense that it is not my personal response to circumstances affecting me personally, but a reflection in me of someone else's response to circumstances affecting him. It is, so to say, distanced from the stream of my own life, *eingeklammert* or bracketed off, and ascribed by me to the other person. This again is not an act of deliberate judgment. I do not begin by observing the presence of a feeling in my mind and then judge that it is a reflection of something in his, but it is immediately projected and perceived by me as his. This projection Dilthey calls a "transposition of myself" (*Uebertragung, Transposition, Sichhineinversetzen*). It means perceiving the other person as possessed of an inner life essentially like my own, and so "rediscovering myself in the Thou" (*das Verstehen ist ein Wiederfinden des Ich im Du*).<sup>2</sup>

Understanding is closely related to sympathy (*Sympathie, das Miterleben*), but though the two normally go together, they are not the same. To understand is to know what someone is experiencing, through a *Nachbild* of his experience, which, though in my consciousness, is projected into him and perceived as his. To sympathize is to have in my own person experiences analogous to his and related to them, e.g., to rejoice with him in his joy

<sup>1</sup> G.S., V, 277.

<sup>2</sup> G.S., VII, 191.

and weep with him in his sorrow. It is not normally possible to understand without sympathizing, whether the person understood is real or only a character in a play or a novel. Dilthey recognizes an exception in the case of instrumental music. "No one will condole with Beethoven over the expression of grief in one of his adagios, and no one can rejoice with the unruffled cheerfulness of an allegro by Haydn."<sup>1</sup>

What I understand may be something small and simple, such as a momentary feeling or a simple idea or purpose ; or it may be more complex, even to the point where I understand a lengthy historical process or a tangled dramatic plot. The more complex it is, the greater the labour which I have to put into understanding it. To understand the simple fact that so-and-so is feeling dreary, I need only feel in myself the *Nachbild* of his dreariness. The process is swift and automatic from the moment when I perceive his expression. But already in conducting a serious conversation the case is altered. Here we have a train of thought mingled with feeling, partly but not wholly expressed in the words which a person speaks, his tone of voice, his accompanying attitudes and gestures, and changing even while he expresses it in response to our own remarks and other expressions. We have to understand the grammatical meaning of each sentence, the logical connection between one sentence and another, the implications of what is said or left unsaid, the emotional flavour of the whole—a very complex piece of mental history, understood through a complex and varied sequence of expressions. Mr. Sherlock Holmes used to astonish Dr. Watson by watching him in silence for ten minutes and then breaking in with a remark which proved to be apposite to Watson's train of thought. Something not unlike this is done by each of us every time he takes part in a conversation. It is a running exercise in mind-reading, leaping from expression to expression, filling gaps, removing inconsistencies, and so presenting us with a highly-refined and intellectually elaborated result which is our understanding of what the other person said.

The complexity is greater still when we pass to the understanding of a lengthy course of action, e.g., the foreign policy of Palmerston, or a dramatic situation and its development, e.g., the plot of the *Iliad* or of *Hamlet*. And here we see clearly, if we did not before, that understanding cannot always be a mere

<sup>1</sup> *G.S.*, VII, 52.

mental reproduction of the experience understood, just as it happened. Even in seeing a play, Dilthey remarks, we cannot grasp it as a whole unless at the end we look back over the whole performance, and this we can only do sketchily, remembering the structural outline of the plot and a few high points of detail, but letting the rest go. It is impossible to hold in the imagination a train of events covering months or years, except by dint of much telescoping and generalizing, omitting the inessentials, throwing the weight on to a few incidents recognized as typical or crucial, and so contriving to grasp much in little. The dramatist and the historian do much of this work for us, and present their material predigested. The amount of sheer intellectual labour that goes into a historian's work, testing the meaning and value of his sources, filling gaps, resolving inconsistencies, detecting causal connections, and so working out a coherent and well-grounded narrative, needs no emphasis. But he is only doing on a large scale what we all do when we understand the sayings and doings of our neighbours.

In this intellectual activity we are guided by the principle of coherence. That interpretation is likely to be true which takes account of all the evidence we have and works it into a story consistent with itself and human nature. Of course the principle of coherence applies, in one way or another, in all spheres of thought, but it applies especially in the sphere of understanding ; for the mind is a living unity in which every part is informed by the character of the whole, and if we understand by projecting ourselves into the object, this means that we understand the object as being also that kind of a unity. Dilthey is fond of contrasting the human studies with natural science in this respect. Our knowledge of the physical world comes from disjointed sense-data which come to us with no objective unity or coherence in them, and a minimum of order in the shape of causal sequence has to be imparted to them by the perceiving mind itself, as Kant made clear ; but in the mind we see the principle of unity, it is given in inner experience and projected in understanding, and in working with this principle we are not imposing an interpretation on the phenomena, but tracing their own inherent structure.

This process of assembling the evidence and filling the gaps includes, of course, a great deal of reasoning on the lines made familiar to us by formal logic ; but it is wholly misconceived if



it is thought of as entirely or even primarily that. It is based on a process of imaginative amplification whose nature we shall understand if we go back to the root from which understanding grows—the mirroring in one mind of experiences taking place in another. The sight of an expression, we said, arouses in me a life which is mine and yet not mine ; mine because it is in my consciousness and I know its quality, and not mine because it is the response of someone else to a situation in which he is involved and I am not. This image of his experience in me, being an image of life, is itself life, it grows and develops, it enacts in me the history which it has pre-enacted in him. Distanced from my own concerns, “incapsulated” as R. G. Collingwood says, it tends in me towards the same sequel which it had in him and according to the same laws. It is thus that I understand, not by generalization and subsumption but by direct vision, what are the obvious and natural consequences of an event which I find recorded.

Let us take a recent instance. History records that in the autumn of 1938 Herr Hitler became a party to an agreement which promised a peaceful and independent future to the Czech State. Any difficulties arising in the future between Germany and Czechoslovakia were to be settled by consultation with other governments, including that of Great Britain. In the following spring he annexed Czechia without genuine excuse and without preliminary consultation. The British Prime Minister and many of his supporters *therefore* abruptly changed their attitude towards Germany and began to foresee and make ready for war. What is behind this *therefore* ? Of course a psychologist could state in general terms a number of laws which govern the reactions of people who realize that they have been deceived and slighted, and no doubt it could be shown that the behaviour of the British government and people then was in accord with these laws. But *we* do not know these laws, and yet we understand quite well what happened, and why. We do so because we put ourselves momentarily into the position of the agents concerned, and then do not infer or guess their next action, but relive it in ourselves. Their response to the situation repeats itself in our minds, and so we see in the rest of the story not merely the things which happened next, but the obvious and natural consequences. We say not *then*, but *therefore*.

Of course this imaginative reliving is not the only factor involved in filling the gaps in our record and making it into a coherent story. There is no question that an immense labour of discursive and abstract thinking has also to go on before the work can take its proper shape. Where imaginative understanding can be turned into or supplemented by causal explanation, this ought to be done, and if there is sense in speaking of the progress of history towards the rank of a science, it must mean in great part this very progress from imaginative to intellective apprehension, from the vision of what is natural to the recognition of what is regular. In so far as this process goes on, the gap between history and sociology will be narrowed, and the dream of the positivists, that history could ultimately be made into applied sociology, represents the goal of such an advance, a goal none the less genuine because it will never be fully attained. Dilthey himself not merely recognizes, but stresses, the element of critical thinking and scientific explanation in history. He discusses the conflict between the pragmatic and the speculative ways of writing history, the extent to which and the methods by which history can hope to get behind the momentary action of the individual agent to his deeper motives, policy and character, and to social trends and forces more deep-seated still. He discusses the part played by the comparative method in history and all the other human studies. He got himself into hot water with his fellow-philosophers for maintaining that the human studies cannot reach full efficiency without a thorough discipline in psychology—a contention not often heard from philosophers of his type, who usually treat psychology as an inferior thing which needs to be kept in its place. But whatever Dilthey might say about the more methodical side of historical research and the logical scaffolding which underpins it, he always added that it is the imaginative process of understanding which gives life and meaning to the rest. It is at work all the time in building up our every-day experience of men, and it reaches a high development in the work of the poets, who are the eyes through which the grown man learns to see. In their work human nature and destiny find expression with a depth and a richness which no amount of generalizing analysis can hope to overtake. In short, as Dilthey puts it, “we always understand more than we know”.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by A. Stein, *Der Begriff des Verstehens bei Dilthey*, p. 55.

Understanding is the "mother earth" to which we have always to return for new strength and sureness of vision. In coming to grips with an outstanding individual or movement in the past, whatever help we may get from general truths and causal inferences, the most proper and (to be paradoxical) the most objective approach is the most subjective, the reliving in ourselves of what we study.<sup>1</sup>

The kind of unity which we find in mental life, and which is the ultimate object of research in our study of it, is called "meaning" (*Bedeutung*) by Dilthey. This term plays a great part in his later writings, and has an important place among the "categories of life" of which he tried once or twice to make a list.<sup>2</sup> *Bedeutung* in Dilthey means not primarily the significance which belongs to an expression or a symbol, but the relation between part and whole in the process of mental life. If we stand back from the turmoil of practical life, the "hunt after ends",<sup>3</sup> and contemplate life quietly, we see it as a process which with the lapse of time is continually shaping itself into a whole, yet never complete or stable. Each incident in the process is the outcome and fulfilment of what went before; each incident opens up some possibilities for the future and shuts out others; and the meaning or significance (*Bedeutung*, *Bedeutsamkeit*) of the particular incident lies in these relations, as the meaning or sense (*Bedeutung*, *Sinn*) of the whole process lies in the unity which these relations both manifest and generate. "The essence of meaning-relations lies in the relations which, in the time-process, are contained in the gradual shaping of a life."<sup>4</sup>

Meaning, so defined, is what understanding (*das Verstehen*) apprehends; and conversely understanding is often defined in terms of the apprehension of this kind of unity. "In understanding we start from the system of the whole, which is given to us as a living reality, to make the particular intelligible to ourselves in terms of it. It is the fact that we live in the consciousness of the system of the whole which enables us to understand a particular statement, a particular gesture, or a particular action".<sup>5</sup> What constitutes "understanding" here is not primarily the relation between an expression and what it expresses, but the relation between part and whole in a living

<sup>1</sup> G.S., V, 278.<sup>2</sup> See G.S., VII, 228 ff.<sup>3</sup> G.S., VI, 319.<sup>4</sup> G.S., VII, 234.<sup>5</sup> G.S., V, 172.

process. It is in this sense primarily that "understanding" is characteristic of the human studies, in contrast with the natural sciences, which construct a unity of law in place of the inner unity of process which is inaccessible to them.

It goes without saying that "meaning" and "understanding" in this sense are inseparable from "meaning" and "understanding" in the other and equally obvious sense, in which "meaning" is the relation between sign and signified, and "understanding" is the deciphering of signs or expressions. This aspect of the matter comes to the fore in Dilthey's writings after 1897, when we find him defining "understanding" in terms of it. "Understanding is our name for the process in which mental life comes to be known through expressions of it which are given to the senses."<sup>1</sup> He is anxious, however, to keep the two aspects together, and this is especially evident in his treatment of "meaning", where he actually tries to exhibit the "meaning" or significance of words and other expressions as a special case of "meaning" in the sense of living unity.<sup>2</sup> Here he goes too far. The time-relations which constitute "meaning" in the latter sense are not the same as the relation between sign and signified, or between expression and lived experience. But it is true that time-relations of the kind in question do subsist between one expression and another. The "meaning" of a word from one point of view may be the object to which it refers; from another it may equally lie in the part which the word plays in the development of the sentence, its relation to what comes before and after. It is safe to say that the ambiguity in Dilthey's use of the words "understanding" and "meaning" testifies to a real connection between the two facts, the fact of expression and the fact of living unity, which are distinct but are not found apart. To "understand" the "meaning" of an expression is also to "understand" the "meaning" (in a different sense of both words) of a fragment of mental life.

Dilthey distinguishes three classes of expressions, differing in the depth and precision of the insight they give.

(a) The first comprises all expressions which convey ideas, i.e., language in its logical aspect, mathematical symbolism, conventional signs such as traffic lights or railway signals, and any-

<sup>1</sup> G.S., V, 332.

<sup>2</sup> G.S., VII, 234-5.

thing else that serves the same purpose. The arbitrary sign in these cases conveys an idea, though when the idea is about a physical fact we sometimes speak of the sign as being a sign of that fact, as e.g., when a bell rings in a railway station to signify the approach of a train. With all expression of this first type our aim is clarity and adequacy, the evil which we try to avoid is ambiguity; and where the system of signs is well worked out and skilfully wielded this aim is largely attained. If someone writes down an algebraic formula, I know exactly what he means. On the other hand, I learn very little else about him. I know what he is thinking, but not what makes him think it, or why he says it, or how he feels, or what sort of a man he is.

(b) The second type of expression comprises human actions. An action is not performed in order to express the agent's purpose, but in order to fulfil it. Nevertheless, to an outside observer, it does express his purpose, i.e., it makes his purpose known. This is clear in simple instances, where there is little or no doubt what purpose an action is meant to fulfil. If I see someone sawing at the roots of a tree, there is little doubt what he intends. Of course the question becomes harder when we come to ulterior aims, and very hard indeed when we come to consider a long course of action stretching over a series of years, e.g., the career of a statesman. This involves great possibility of misinterpretation, though offering deeper insight into his character if we succeed in understanding. And however much we may learn about what he purposed and did in the circumstances which confronted him, we can never know what other possibilities there may have been in him, such as only a different environment could have called out.

(c) The third type of expression is what Dilthey calls the life-expression (*Erlebnisausdruck*), i.e., the spontaneous utterance or exclamation, the clapping of hands, the laugh or the sigh, facial expression, gesture, and attitude, and in fine all those modes of expression which give utterance primarily to emotional states. This is a type of expression not established by convention but connatural to man. It arises involuntarily out of lived experience. It can sometimes go deep, and make possible a really delicate and intimate understanding. It can express things which the subject himself does not know about himself. Yet at best what it reveals is more easily felt than defined, it is sometimes am-

biguous, and can be and constantly is suppressed or counterfeited.

Ordinary language is easily seen to partake of both (a) and (c). It expresses ideas, but often obscurely, and it is also charged with feeling. Only in the exact sciences, if even there, do we find language used without emotional overtones; while in literature proper they are not overtones, but part of the melody. What is true of language and literature is true of most art, and it is from this point that we can most naturally approach Dilthey's account of the nature and functions of art. His views on the subject find expression in various of his writings, but especially in three essays published between 1887 and 1895. In two of these, *The Poet's Imagination* and *On Comparative Psychology*, he expounds an aesthetic based on the recognition of a double function of art in evoking and governing feeling, and in conveying ideas.

The poet is a man of exceptionally rich and deep feeling, and of a fertile and flexible imagination. This gives him, in the first place, exceptional powers of understanding and expression, so that he can express for himself and evoke in us emotional states and processes beyond our usual capacity. He can feel to the full the tension of a dramatic situation, and express it without false simplification or sentimentalization; he can feel his way through conflict and suspense to a final reconciliation, and can take us with him on the way. This is art in its capacity as life-expression.

But, in the second place, the poet is our master in the appreciation of excellence in things, the appreciation of that value which lies in the perfection of the type. All life is a complex of functions, and those qualities in the living thing which make for adequate fulfilment of function are singled out by us as the "essential" or "typical" qualities, and become for us both a descriptive norm and a standard of value. An individual being or action which strikingly exhibits these essential qualities is recognized as a "type", and becomes a standard of reference by which other individuals are judged. Everyone has in some degree the "eye for types",<sup>1</sup> but here again the artist is ahead of us. He can single out the essential elements in a thing from the inessentials, and so portray it as to bring out what is typical or truly significant in it. His work is to us "an invitation to vision",<sup>2</sup> in Dilthey's

<sup>1</sup> *Das typische Sehen*, G.S., V, 279.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

phrase; it shows us more than we had suspected in familiar things, and increases our power of discernment. This is art in its capacity as conveying ideas.

It is very different, of course, from the expression of clear-cut statements and reasonings in narrative or argumentative prose. "Thought produces concepts, art creates types."<sup>1</sup> But this artistic activity is of the greatest importance for our understanding of life, and stands in a close relation to the progress of the human studies. "None of us would possess more than a meagre part of our present understanding of human conditions if we had not become used to seeing through the poet's eyes, and beholding Hamlets and Gretchens, Richards and Cordelias, Marquis Posas and Philips in the men around us."<sup>2</sup> "Painters taught us to read in the countenances of men and to interpret attitude and demeanour. Poets are our organs for the understanding of men, and they influence the way in which we lead our lives in love, in marriage, and with friends."<sup>3</sup> When we come to the systematic study of life in history and the associated disciplines, we need a keen "eye for types", a power of imaginative reconstruction and understanding, and skill in presentation, and in all these the poets are our teachers. The natural sciences build their theoretical structure directly upon sense-perception, but the human studies do not build directly upon lived experience. The transition is mediated, the understanding is deepened and the elementary concepts coined, by the work of the artists. Dilthey thinks that historical studies always flourish best in ages of high poetical achievement, and that poetry has often shown an insight which gave impetus and inspiration to history. The expression and interpretation of life by art came into existence long before the scientific human studies were thought of, and they cannot overtake it. They give knowledge, but art gives understanding, and "we understand more than we know". All this apart from the obvious fact that a work of art is itself an important object of historical study, since it expresses not only what its creator understood of life, but also his personal way of understanding it, which is moulded by, and is evidence of, the intellectual and spiritual conditions of his time.

Dilthey illustrates his points in *On Comparative Psychology* by tracing the growth of our understanding of human life through

<sup>1</sup> G.S., VI, 186.

<sup>2</sup> G.S., V, 274.

<sup>3</sup> G.S., V, 275.



three stages represented by Homer, Shakespeare, and Schiller. Homer was the first to reduce the gods to mere stage machinery, and to divine the truth that a man's destiny lies in his character. He did not understand how character can grow and change, nor did any of the ancients, but Shakespeare did. Schiller has made the third great step forward by understanding how the development of character and the working out of its consequences are interwoven with the complex of social and historical circumstances. These are three stages in the growth of that understanding of man which lies at the foundation of history and the human studies ; but we owe them to poets.

The importance of poetry as a reservoir of understanding has been recognized in every country which has had a developed poetry at all, and when the light of history dawns upon the intellectual life of ancient Greece we find Homer and Hesiod being used as an organ of education, and poets being quoted in support of contentions in philosophical debate. Such use of the poets inevitably led to clashes of interpretation, and so to the desire for an art or skill of interpretation, or "hermeneutic" as Dilthey calls it. In *The Rise of Hermeneutics* Dilthey gives a brief account of the history, scope, and significance of this study, which he conceives as more than a mere technical aid for students of literature, or even of all the arts, and as involving enquiries which ought to find a place in the logical and epistemological foundations of the human studies. "Its business is to furnish, in opposition to the continual inroads of romantic arbitrariness and sceptical subjectivity into the field of history, a theoretical vindication of the universal validity of interpretation, upon which all security in history depends."<sup>1</sup>

Hermeneutics began as the exercise of mere personal virtuosity in understanding and interpretation, but soon it began to give rise to general rules, which were bound up together with the rules of composition to form that body of doctrine which the ancients called "grammar" and "rhetoric". Beginning with the Sophists, this codification had made great strides by the time when Aristotle wrote his *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*, and further advances were made by the Alexandrian scholars after his death. The Stoic Crates of Mallos introduced at Pergamum the principle of allegorical interpretation, which, being necessary in a civiliza-

<sup>1</sup> G.S., V, 331.



tion whose intelligence and moral standards were at odds with its sacred writings, was accepted at Alexandria too, was taken over by the Alexandrian school of Christian scholars, and ultimately conquered the whole Christian world. At the Renaissance the recovery of the classical authors brought with it the recovery of the ancient rhetoric. At the same time the need of a reliable science of interpretation was reinforced for the Renaissance scholars by the unprecedented situation in which they stood, trying as they were for the first time in history to reconstruct a picture of a past civilization out of fragmentary writings and ruins, with the contemporary background fallen away and lost. In no long time the Reformation came to add its note of urgency ; for to the Protestant scholars, assailed on the one hand by the Council of Trent, which declared the Bible uninterpretable without the aid of tradition, and on the other hand by Anabaptist sectaries who took their interpretation of it from crazy prophets, and confronted among their own people by the divergence of opinion resulting from private judgment let loose upon so difficult a group of writings as the Bible is, it was a matter of life and death to vindicate the intrinsic intelligibility of the Bible and the possibility of interpreting it in terms of itself.

Thus from Melancthon onwards a line of research stretches out, to be met in the eighteenth century by another line starting from Spinoza and the English Deists, who approached the Bible in a more detached and historical spirit, and showed how it could be understood in terms of the age from which it comes and the movements whose literature it contains. Classical scholarship soon gave rise to analogous problems in the shape of the Homeric question. The stage was thus set for a synthetic mind, well disciplined in all these various lines of enquiry, to bring them together and go behind them all to the common problem which they pose, the problem of the nature of understanding in general. Schleiermacher was the man who did this, and Dilthey regards him as having lifted hermeneutics from the status of a literary technique to that of a philosophic discipline.

Dilthey's own hermeneutic is an elaboration of Schleiermacher's. Before interpretation proper can begin, a background of knowledge is required. This knowledge must be in part grammatical and linguistic and in part historical, so that we have the means of considering the work before us in the light

of the circumstances of its production and the language in which it is written. Granted this preliminary knowledge, we approach our task of interpretation, and are met at once by a logical problem. Interpretation, it seems, must necessarily be a circular process, because every part of a literary work requires the whole to make it intelligible, while the whole in turn can only be understood in terms of the parts. Every part of a literary work has an indeterminate meaning. Every word, unless it be a technical term belonging to one of the trades or sciences, has a considerable variety of possible meanings, and in itself means all and therefore none of these. A dictionary will tell us what the range of possibilities is, but within that range the word moves freely. It is, in Dilthey's phrase, "indeterminately determinate".<sup>1</sup> What meaning it has on any particular occasion can only be settled in terms of its context, since a word which in itself might mean three or four things will probably be capable of not more than one meaning in a particular context. What is true of words is true of sentences, paragraphs, chapters, all the structural components of a book. The precise interpretation of each of these depends on the logical structure of the whole, and the purpose which it meant to serve, whether scientific, oratorical, cristic, or what not. On the other hand, it is evident that the whole consists of its parts and can be understood only by reading them through successively and building them up into a coherent picture. Here is a logical circle, and the same circle meets us when we try to understand the work in the light of influences brought to bear on the author. We can understand his thoughts only by reference to the situation which called them forth ; and yet we can understand what situation was in his mind only if we already know what he thought.

This circle is logically unbreakable, but we break it in practice every time we understand. We glance roughly over the parts and get from them a first impression of the whole. Then we use this impression of the whole to throw light upon any points which may have been obscure. We go to and fro in this way between part and whole until we have an interpretation which is coherent in itself, does violence to none of the parts, and fits into the historical circumstances as known to us. When we have this, we think we understand. We apprehend the structure

<sup>1</sup> G.S., VII, 220.

or "inner form" of the work, the sense of the whole and the significance of each part.

The process need not stop here. The meaning of one book may appear more fully in the light of its author's other works, and this in turn in the light of his life and character. From these we may be led on to consider his circumstances and the age in which he lived, and to see his writings as incidents in a process of cultural or social history which goes far beyond him and is part of the great story of mankind. Thus the interpretation of a book can widen out until it melts into historical study. At the same time, as has been said, understanding is not separable from appreciation and judgment, so that interpretation passes over insensibly into criticism, and this into the laying down of general principles for criticism, i.e., into aesthetics.

The process of interpretation has been presented so far as a logical process, and such in a measure it is. But interpretation rests on understanding, which rests on a projection of the self into the other, and this is not an intellectual but an imaginative act. There is something in it which cannot be reduced to rule, and which Dilthey, following Schleiermacher, calls an element of "divination". It cannot be taught like a technique, but only caught by infection from interpreters of genius. To the purely logical mind, it is a mystery and an offence, and such a mind can point out that its insights are often incapable of proof. In any case the array of arguments adduced in support of them is not the real basis of the conviction which we feel. But if interpretation lacks the dry cogency of logical demonstration, it also escapes its limitations. A good interpreter can go to the heart of a work of art and see things there of which the artist himself was not conscious, things which were in his mind, but which are made manifest only by the expression he gave them, and even so not manifest to himself. Dilthey is fond of quoting Schleiermacher's phrase, that interpretation often succeeds in understanding an author better than he understood himself.

Art expresses an understanding of life which is vivid, spontaneous, more characterized by imaginative vigour than by intellectual acumen. It is earlier in time than the search for explanations and scientific theory, and they can never supersede it. Nevertheless, a time comes when the understanding of life through art is no longer enough, and closer and more systematic

enquiry and exposition are attempted. This is the birth of the human studies, and in some of his latest writings Dilthey has given us a picture of the stages by which these studies arise from the same soil as art, the soil of ordinary human experience.

The root from which everything grows is the tendency, natural to man, to meditate on the past and future, on his joys and sorrows, successes and failures. He feels life as a casual sequence of events, and looks for a "meaning" in Dilthey's sense, a unity and a direction in it. With most people this happens occasionally and spasmodically, but with some it becomes a chief concern, they enquire systematically into the meaning of their own lives, and often give literary expression to what they find. The result is autobiography, a literary form in which Dilthey shows especial interest, and which he regards as the stem from which the other human studies have all branched out. As a type of enquiry it has special advantages, in that the subject enquiring is also the object enquired into, the historian who tells the story is the same who has already lived it, and knows it from within in a quite peculiar way. Hence "autobiography is the highest and most instructive form in which the understanding of life comes before us".<sup>1</sup> Dilthey singles out for especial praise the *Confessions* of St. Augustine and Rousseau and the *Aus meinem Leben* of Goethe.

Of course there are disadvantages. The autobiographer is likely to have a deep but also a one-sided view of himself, unless he is a man of wide interest and sympathy, and has so entered into the lives of those among whom he has moved that their story has become part of his own. In proportion as he does this, however, his work transcends the limits of an autobiography and becomes something like a history of his own times.

History is the activity of persons, its unit is the individual, though always the individual in relation to his surroundings, and the individual can be understood more fully and deeply than the group. Hence it is natural that the next step beyond autobiography should be biography, and various interests conspire to indicate particular individuals as fit subjects for it. "The family preserves its reminiscences. Criminal justice and its theories may preserve the life of an offender, psychopathology that of an abnormal man."<sup>2</sup> But the most suitable subjects are

<sup>1</sup> G.S., VII, 199.

<sup>2</sup> G.S., VII, 247.

men whose influence on their time has been great, and especially those whose influence seems to spring from a spiritual depth beyond the ordinary. Dilthey's own biographical studies of Schleiermacher and Hegel are cases in point.

Biography is a literary problem, because it is written with a double focus. On the one hand it must show intimate understanding, and portray the subject so far as possible as he saw himself. On the other hand, the biographer is expected to use the advantage of the distance at which he stands from his subject. He can see him as a factor in the general historical process, acting upon and acted upon by other persons and great impersonal forces. If his subject is already dead, he knows what came of his hopes and plans. This wider horizon is a gain in objectivity, but it means combining two methods of approach; for the intimate method appropriate to autobiography is not appropriate to that side of biography which comes near to historiography.

Historical records exist in germ in the traditions of primitive peoples and in the stories told round the camp fire. Scientific history, however, is a product of civilization, and depends for its very possibility upon the existence of adequate records and a proper technique for using them. Only in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has historiography acquired full consciousness of itself as a science, but the effect of the "historical movement" which ran parallel with the romantic and post-Kantian movements has been to make it a formidable engine for the removal of myth and fancy and the detection of the real past of man. The historical consciousness is already a factor of the first importance in the social and cultural life of Europe, and its importance will remain.

Dilthey describes history and the kindred enquiries as a study of "objective mind", or of the "objectifications of mind". This phrase has a familiar ring. It occurs in Hegel, who uses it as a name for the second division of his *Philosophy of Mind*. "Objective mind" in Hegel covers all the principles and relationships composing the moral and social life of man: economic, legal, ethical, domestic, civil, political activities are grouped together under this heading. It is contrasted with "subjective mind", which includes all processes and activities within the individual consciousness, or what a modern writer would sum up as "psychology", and with "absolute mind", which includes

those activities through which man becomes conscious of his kinship with the universe, viz., art, religion and philosophy. This division is artificial. It results from Hegel's metaphysic of self-consciousness, and not from empirical study, though of course a great deal of what he says in detail is the fruit of such study and is of permanent value. Dilthey himself, while paying tribute to Hegel's knowledge and insight on various points of detail, takes care to dissociate his own use of the term "objective mind" from Hegel's.

What Dilthey means by it is that body of expressions of mental life which are not momentary and transient, but in various ways permanent and enduring, and which constitute a most important factor in our environment. Buildings, roads and railways, canals and reservoirs, ploughed fields and parks, works of art, books of all kinds, systems of ideas, habits and customs, social and cultural institutions—all these are the manifestations of a human activity which has moulded the world into which we are born, and largely determines our own activity within it. Through them the past acts upon the present and society upon the individual. In them is stored up the deposit of civilization which we receive, hand on, and increase. They are the tangible achievements in which the mind of man has shown its presence in nature and its creative powers, and only through them is that mind accessible to historical study.

The data of history not only are manifestations of mind, but are perceived as such, and this makes an epistemological difference between historical study and natural science. The scientist observes things and processes, but perceives no activity in them, no dynamic relationships. What he learns of their causal connections is learned by hypothesis and experiment and remains in the form of abstract law. But the manifestations of mind are instinct with the life from which they spring and upon which they continually react. They refer beyond themselves as physical facts to the activity from which they come and the activity which they can inspire. We cannot observe them at all without seeing them as parts of a dynamic process, and this is the very thing that is meant by calling them "historical".

Everything fixed, everything alien, such as is proper to the images of the physical world, must be thought away from the concept of the given in this realm. All that is given is here a product, and so

historical . . . Mind understands only what it has created. Nature, the object of natural science, embraces that reality which is produced independently of the activity of mind. Everything upon which man by acting has set his stamp forms the object of the human studies.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of historical study, according to Dilthey, is to come to know scientifically and methodically what in art we understand imaginatively, the nature of the human mind. This can never be done completely, and can only be done at all by virtue of the manifestations in which the mind has objectified itself. These manifestations are not purely spontaneous, they are called forth by circumstances, and of course if the circumstances had been different the manifestations would have been so too. Human nature is a reservoir of infinite possibilities, but only those are realized which find occasion for realization, and not all even of these ; since in any situation there are a number of possibilities open to us, of which we can only choose one. The historian explores the record of choices actually made, and tries to fill out the picture by sketching in those possibilities which were open but were rejected. "The point at issue is to seek out the mind itself, how it is always, under the conditions of a present and a space, tied to definite possibilities."<sup>2</sup> Such exploration is interesting in itself, and also valuable in its effect upon the historian ; for the understanding of how others have reacted to situations unlike his own reveals to him possibilities in his own nature of which his own circumstances had never made him aware. Dilthey instances the effect of his own study of Luther and the Reformation in enabling him at least to understand a religious experience of a depth and intensity such as in his own person he was not capable of sharing. "Man, bound and determined by the reality of life, is set free not only through art—as has often been set forth—but also through the understanding of history."<sup>3</sup>

This widening of consciousness through historical knowledge has disconcerting results. Every age expresses its attitude to life and the world in certain principles of thought and conduct, which are regarded in that age as absolute and unconditionally valid, as constituting a "law of nature" which only frivolity or ill-will can question. The historian discovers these principles

<sup>1</sup> G.S., VII, 148.

<sup>2</sup> G.S., VII, 254.

<sup>3</sup> G.S., VII, 216.

in every age which he studies, but he also discovers that they vary from age to age, and that, in spite of the claim to absoluteness which is always made, changed circumstances always result in changed principles, which are therefore historically relative. The historian who discovers this has of course principles of his own, and these will appear in the manner in which he writes history. He may slip into treating these as absolute, but his own discoveries about other people forbid us to follow him in this. History, having revealed the relativity of all ideas and practices, ends by pointing to its own relativity, and leaves us in the position known as historicism, or historical relativism. Dilthey recognizes this, and there is evidence that he was visited by occasional twinges of nervousness at the blank prospect which it opens up—a prospect which has led many in the present century to cynicism and apathy, and caused others to seek escape in dogmatic obscurantism and authoritarianism. There are some, however, who have found it possible to look historicism in the face and yet avoid discouragement, and in spite of occasional doubts Dilthey was one of these. He not merely admits the necessity of historicism, he proclaims it, and regards it as a source of freedom and inspiration.

How can he do this? Because he sees historicism first of all as a deliverance from superstition and illusion, and secondly as a revelation of the manifold capacities of human life. If our grandfathers reacted to their situation in one way and we react to ours in another, the conclusion which Dilthey draws is not that no one can ever know how to act or think, but that in every situation man can find a way. Even our illusions reflect something in experience, and are therefore not wholly illusions. Dropping the claim of absoluteness does not mean surrendering every claim to truth, but merely admitting many truths where before we had only a few. And the more we learn that every particular set of principles is the mind's reaction to a particular set of circumstances, the more it appears that even historicism has to admit one absolute after all, viz., the marvellously adaptable human mind itself.

The historical consciousness of the finitude of every historical phenomenon, every human or social state, of the relativity of every sort of belief, is the last step towards the liberation of man. With it, man attains the sovereign power to wring from every experience



its content, to surrender wholly to it, without prepossession . . . Every beauty, every sanctity, every sacrifice, re-lived and expounded, opens up perspectives which disclose a reality . . . And, in contrast with the relativity, the continuity of the creative force makes itself felt as the central historical fact.<sup>1</sup>

Autobiography, biography, and historiography together form a single stem from which other more specialized studies branch out, and these studies are what Dilthey sometimes calls the "systematic human studies". They are very various, including technical disciplines like grammar and rhetoric, normative disciplines like moral and political theory or art criticism, and generalizing sciences such as psychology, sociology, or economics. They have in common an interest in the mind of man, which they satisfy not by tracing the story of human achievement along the line of time, as history does, but by singling out one aspect of it and studying that in abstraction from the rest. They lack much of the aesthetic element which clings about history, and are conducted with more thought for direct practical application. Dilthey is not less interested in these than in the historical disciplines, and spends much thought on the precise relation between the two groups. The two together constitute what he calls the *Geisteswissenschaften* or, as I translate it, the human studies, and it is this whole group, not the historical disciplines alone, that he compares and contrasts with the natural sciences. He clung to this view in spite of pressure from a kindred school which attempted to sever the generalizing sciences from the historical studies and group them with the natural sciences on the score of a common method. Dilthey insists that the proper grouping is not by method but by subject-matter, and it is here that all the human studies stand together in contrast with the sciences of nature. But just because they have a common subject-matter, they have also important epistemological characteristics in common.

Their common subject-matter is man : not the human mind only, but human beings, who are composed of body and mind together, are acted upon by physical things, and can act upon them and communicate with one another only through physical means. It follows that the human studies must have a very large concern with physical things and processes, and must therefore

<sup>1</sup> *G.S.*, VII, 290-1.

overlap the natural sciences. The study of language and music involves reference to the physical laws of sound-formation, strategy and military history involve knowledge of the physical resources of the belligerents and the physical laws governing such things, and history in general must always be related to geographical and climatic conditions. But in the human studies these physical facts are considered only as they affect the formation and execution of human purposes, or serve to express human thoughts and feelings, and in this capacity what is physically insignificant may be historically of decisive importance. A few sheets of paper coming into the hands of Copernicus revolutionized the consciousness of mankind. Why? Because they were printed sheets, and contained a record of Greek speculations on the idea of a heliocentric universe. In short, the human studies are concerned with physical phenomena only in so far as they are related to human consciousness, and especially as they are expressions through which that consciousness can be understood. The natural scientist begins with sensible phenomena and works his way behind them to a world of hypothetical entities, which he regards as the reality of which the sensible phenomena are the appearance. The human studies begin with what are partly the same sensible phenomena, and also work their way behind them, but to a world of living reality whose expression or outward manifestation the phenomena are. The category of *appearance and reality* is characteristic of the natural sciences, that of *inner and outer* is characteristic of the human studies. Even in speculative metaphysics the alternation of these two categories betrays the activity of the two types of outlook.

The "systematic human studies" gave Dilthey much more trouble than history and biography, and what he made of them will furnish us with material for the next three chapters.

### III

Modern psychology grew up together with modern philosophy. For two hundred years the great names in both are the same, and it is sometimes hard to decide whether a particular piece of teaching by one of them should rank as a contribution to philosophy or to psychology. Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley and Hume, all stand in this ambiguous position. Several of them made suggestions which are still living issues in psychological discussion, and Hume was the first to set forth in plain language the project of a psychology which should be an empirical science, grounded on observation and experiment, and capable of serving as a foundation for much else.

Hume's own psychology was not experimental, and it was in Germany that a genuine experimental psychology was born. It owed something ultimately to Kant's insistence that there can be no positive science which is not applied mathematics. Inspired by this, Herbart introduced mathematical methods into psychology, Fechner showed how to combine precise measurement with experimentation, and Wundt at Leipzig became the founder of the first all-round psychological laboratory. These latter developments took place in Dilthey's life-time. Fechner's *Elemente der Psychophysik* came out in 1860 ; Wundt was a year older than Dilthey himself, and ultimately outlived him.

Some of these writers made sweeping-claims for psychology. Hume believed that there was no branch of knowledge which did not in some degree depend upon it ; for logic, moral and political theory, and "criticism" are concerned with human activity, and therefore obviously depend on the science of human nature, and even natural science and natural theology need a logical and epistemological foundation which only the science of the mind can give. This remained the prevailing view in British philosophy until the time of Mill, whose influence Dilthey felt in his formative years. Wundt also had ambitious views for psychology. He expected it ultimately to provide a firm foundation for all the social sciences, and to absorb into itself such "philosophical" disciplines as logic, aesthetics, moral and political theory.

Opinion among philosophers has long been divided on the question of these claims. It was philosophers who first put them forward: the psychological approach to philosophy and to knowledge in general finds its classic expression in Locke, Berkeley, and Hume. In Dilthey's time a kindred position was held by the philosopher-scientist Helmholtz, whom he knew and admired as a colleague at Berlin. On the other hand, a strong resistance has been and continues to be put up by philosophers of the Kantian and post-Kantian schools, and by others who go back further still to Descartes, or to the scholastics, or even to Plato. They argue that psychology is a positive science, a study of fact, whereas logic and moral and political theory are normative studies. In particular they argue that psychology is an empirical study of states and processes of consciousness, regarded as events in the history of an organism, whereas epistemology is an *a priori* study of the relation between consciousness and its object, with a view to discriminating between appearance and reality. Psychology regards true and false belief, veridical perception and illusion, all alike as facts of mental history, and studies them all alike from the standpoint of psychological law. The only effect it can have on the theory of knowledge is to cast doubt upon all our beliefs and pave the way to scepticism, because it shows how many non-logical influences enter into the formation of our judgments. It is by a different study, and on non-psychological grounds, that the objectivity of thought and the reality of its objects must be vindicated. Such a study Kant and his successors find in transcendental logic or epistemology. Psychology itself, they say, presupposes such a study, for unless the possibility of knowledge is first established, no positive science can move hand or foot.

Dilthey unhesitatingly took the psychologistic side in this controversy. We do not need epistemology to convince us of the possibility of knowledge. Epistemology itself presupposes the knowledge that there is such a thing as knowledge, to give it something to talk about, and the fact that we have knowledge is more certain than any epistemological explanation of the fact. Nor do we need epistemology to tell us what is the test of knowledge or truth. We learn this test in childhood and spend our lives applying it. The fact that we do so, and the nature of the test we use, are among the empirical facts which psychology

can and must discover. Nor do we need epistemology to tell us that a real world exists. The real world is a fact of consciousness,<sup>1</sup> and if it were not so, epistemology could not begin to talk about it. Of course, questions arise as to what precise fact of consciousness or group of such facts is what constitutes the real world, and what exactly we mean by calling it "real". But the only way to answer these questions is by a close analysis of consciousness itself, which is a psychological enquiry. The business of epistemology is to use the results of this enquiry for the purpose of setting at rest the various questions, largely verbal, which arise from careless or unskilful use of words like "object", "existence", "reality", "external", "truth", "validity", "value", and so on, and of cutting the ground from under metaphysical fictions by showing how they arise from the misuse of words or the ignoring of aspects of experience. In short, Dilthey's general outlook is that of Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, any of whom might have endorsed his description of epistemology as "psychology in motion, and in motion towards a definite end".<sup>2</sup> He denies Kant's claim to have found a way of studying the mind which is not empirical psychology, and shows how Kant's own "transcendental aesthetic and logic" are in fact disfigured by errors taken over straight from the prevailing psychology of his time. The epistemologist cannot help laying his foundations in psychology, and the only question is whether he will do it consciously and therefore critically, or pretend to be doing something else, and therefore do it amateurishly. The philosopher who disclaims his dependence on psychology does not become free. On the contrary, his bonds are made strong. "He presupposes it. He makes use of it. But he does not control it."<sup>3</sup>

Going so far with the psychologistic movement, Dilthey naturally goes further, and makes psychology the fundamental science (*grundlegende Wissenschaft*) on which moral and political theory, aesthetics, and the positive human studies all depend. It stands related to them, he says, as mechanics (sometimes he says mathematics) is related to the physical sciences. In a sense they are all special applications of psychology, and the concepts

<sup>1</sup> This does not mean that it is *no more than* a fact of consciousness, but simply that, if we make a list of the things of which we are conscious, the real world must appear in the list.

<sup>2</sup> G.S., V, 151.

<sup>3</sup> G.S., V, 149.

or categories which are fundamental in them are really "concepts of the second order" derived from psychology. Concepts such as value and demand in economics, or responsibility and punishment in jurisprudence, must be defined on a basis of psychological knowledge if the definition is not to be fumbling and uncertain. Moral and political theory, aesthetics, and history require insight into the variety of human nature as well as its underlying unity. They need a typology of man, and again the choice is between a typology worked out *ad hoc* by the individual thinker on the basis of personal experience, and a typology safely based on systematic psychological study. "A type of human nature always stands between the historian and his sources, whence he desires to awaken figures to throbbing life; it stands no less between the political thinker and the realities of society, for whose progress he desires to lay down rules. The sole aim of science is to render this subjective type correct and fruitful."<sup>1</sup>

The obvious objection to this is that the representatives of the human studies themselves are not all anxious for such psychological support. As with the philosophers, some welcome psychology, others are suspicious or hostile. But the reason for this is simply that the psychology which Dilthey has in mind, the psychology which is capable of doing what he expects of it, has not yet come into existence. What is now presented under that name, says Dilthey, writing in 1894, is something manifestly inferior to the other human studies in insight, repugnant even to common sense, and divided between warring schools whose doctrines are all as dubious as one another. He alludes to unfortunate excursions of this half-baked psychology into economics, political theory, jurisprudence, and aesthetics, and names Grote, Buckle, and Taine as instances of its bad effect on the writing of history. His conclusion from all this, however, is not that psychology ought to be cold-shouldered, but that it ought to be reformed.

To see what reforms are called for, let us examine more closely the defects of existing psychology. Dilthey finds two, of which the *first* is its inability to do justice to the higher functions of human thought and action. It is harmless at the worst, and often instructive, when it talks about sensation, or about the

<sup>1</sup> G.S., I, 32.

simpler pleasures and pains. But it has really nothing to say about creative imagination as seen in the artist, about the sense of value and obligation, about self-sacrifice, about religious devotion, about the understanding and sympathy which make a teacher of genius like Pestalozzi. On points like these we learn much more from the vast but formless literature in which keen reflective observers have written down their experience of life—handbooks, commonplace books, memoirs, proverbs and epigrams and the like. Psychology ought to take this gnomic wisdom and the insights of the poets, and give them precise expression and a logical grounding, but the existing psychology is incapable of this.

It is incapable because it is too formal and too individualistic. Too formal, because it analyses the contents of consciousness into elementary sensations and feelings of pleasure and pain, and pretends to construct all the wealth of human thought and action out of combinations of these. It ignores the real variety of instinctive drives, which are the basis of character and the substance of moral and spiritual life. We need a "real psychology" (*Realpsychologie*) or "content-psychology" (*Inhaltspsychologie*) to do justice to these. At the same time we must recognize that some of these drives are social in character, and that it is just these which are of importance for the foundations of the other human studies. Dilthey believes that not only psychology, but also economics, political theory, and other kindred studies have gone astray in recent times through taking for granted the self-contained individual as their foundation, and failing to recognize that the life of the individual consists largely in the social relations into which he enters, the historical process of which he is a product and upon which he reacts. "Man as a fact prior to history and society is a fiction of genetic explanation; the man whom sound analytical science has for its object is the individual as an element in society."<sup>1</sup> It is not merely that the individual is affected by external factors and reacts upon them in pursuit of his own interest; he goes outside his private concerns, makes the interests and purposes of others his own, and thus becomes in the fullest sense a social being. A true content-psychology or "anthropology" must recognize this.

The *second* defect which Dilthey finds in contemporary

<sup>1</sup> *G.S.*, I, 31-2.

psychology is the uncertainty of its results. This is fatal to any attempt to use it as a basis for other branches of enquiry. Mathematics and mechanics owe their position at the basis of the physical sciences to the certitude of the one and the as-good-as-certitude of the other. Psychology, on the contrary, brings an element of doubt wherever it comes. "A war of all against all rages over its domain, not less fiercely than over the field of metaphysics. Nowhere yet, even on the farthest horizon, is anything in sight which might avail to decide this war."<sup>1</sup> Dilthey ascribes this to the adoption of a mistaken method. Psychology took shape in the bosom of modern philosophy at a time when philosophy was strongly influenced by mathematics and the natural sciences. The methods and presuppositions of atomic physics were treated as the methods and presuppositions of all possible sciences, and Hume was only giving voice to a generally accepted prejudice when he said that the way to make psychology scientific was to apply to it the procedure of physics. This meant reducing the variety of mental life to the combinations and interactions of units of sensation and feeling, supposed to be simple and primary, and to be brought and held together by laws of association. It was a picture as unlike ordinary experience as the physicist's picture is unlike the world we perceive, but it was supposed to be verifiable in the same way as his, by being shown to explain the facts. This, however, is just what could not be done. The method of physical science was here being used in a field where it cannot succeed. The sense-data upon which knowledge of the physical world is based contain in themselves, as perceived, no principle of order and system. That has to be added by the perceiving mind, in the shape of the principles of causality and uniformity. The detailed application of these principles leads to the postulation of units of matter which are unperceived and very unlike what is perceived, but in terms of whose combinations and interactions the phenomena can be explained and predicted. The whole thing is a hypothetical construction, as every reflective scientist knows, but it succeeds because we have unlimited scope for experimentation and for exact measurement. By these means we can force a decision between alternative hypotheses, and so the physical sciences advance on a basis of general agreement. Psychology

<sup>1</sup> *G.S.*, V, 142.



has not these advantages. The character of mental phenomena makes exact measurement impossible, and it and other factors severely limit the scope of experimentation, except on that border-line between mind and body where psychophysics is at home. We can form hypotheses about the relations between mental facts and processes, and between mind and body; but we can form too many, and there is no experimental control.

Is it then possible to construct a psychology without building hypotheses into its foundations? Dilthey thinks it is, and in his *Ideas concerning a Descriptive and Analytical Psychology* (1894) he formulates his view in terms of a distinction between two kinds of science which he calls "descriptive" and "explanatory". All science must analyse its object, seeking to determine its ultimate irreducible units and the laws which express their interrelation. A descriptive science is one whose units and laws are found by empirical analysis, or close examination of what is actually given in experience. An explanatory science is one which takes its units and laws from a methodological assumption which determines their general nature beforehand. Such an assumption, and all that flows from it, is a hypothetical construction. The classic example of an explanatory science is modern physics, which is compelled to use the method of hypothesis because the data of perception contain no principle of unity, and which has found success in the hypothesis of a world of imperceptible atoms possessing only primary qualities. This explains the world of perception, but is certainly far from describing it. This is the influence which has led psychology to adopt its hypothesis of unit sensations and feelings, and other hypotheses which equally go behind the facts of experience. But psychology has no need of this procedure, because, says Dilthey, the data of inner perception contain a principle of order which makes possible a coherent account of mental life in purely descriptive and empirical terms.

Mental life, he thinks, is a functional unity which cannot be reduced to or built up theoretically out of non-functional units. This is where he parts company with sensationalism, and also with Brentano, whose position is only superficially like his own.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Brentano was calling for a "descriptive" psychology five or six years before Dilthey reached that point, and his influence was considerable in various directions. It prepared the way for Meinong's philosophy and for Husserl's "phenomenological" method. On the difference between the Brentano-Husserl conception and Dilthey's

The real unit of mental life is not a sensation or feeling, or even an isolated "intentional act" with its "content", but a total reaction of the whole self to a situation confronting it. Every such reaction (called by Dilthey an *Erlebnis*) includes elements of three main types, viz., cognitive, affective, and conative, and these follow and depend on one another in a definite order which constitutes the ground-rhythm of mental life. Cognition comes first, then feeling, then conation. I receive news of a friend's death: I am sorry and perhaps surprised: I am moved to do various things which the situation requires, such as writing letters of condolence or attending the funeral: and when I have done these my reaction to the situation is complete. Or I am asked to do something which only I can do, which is important, but which will cause me inconvenience: I think it over from various points of view: I am involved in a conflict of feelings: a sense of obligation emerges: I yield to this and do what is asked of me: so again the reaction is complete. A total reaction like this may be complete in a moment, as when I sit on a nail, feel discomfort, and move to another seat. Or it may last for hours, days, or even years, if it consists in the working out of a long-term plan or undertaking. In the latter case it will be a complex reaction, composed of many smaller reactions, one boxed within another, but each deriving its significance and its *raison d'être* from the sense of the whole.

Every unit-reaction contains cognition, feeling, and conation, and none of these is possible without the rest. I cannot cognize a thing without being interested in it and having feelings and/or desires about it. I cannot feel unless I have an idea of the object, and feeling tends to pass over into action. I cannot act unless I know the situation and my own aim, and action is usually motivated and always accompanied by feeling. These relations between the three elements in experience are called by Dilthey the "structure" or "structural system" (*Struktur*,

conception, even at their closest approximation, see my article in the *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Supplementary Volume for 1932, pp. 84-100. Dilthey's "descriptive psychology" is to study typological and causal relations as well as types of mental phenomena. In its original conception it is not a separate study from the positive science of psychology, but is that science methodologically transformed. It is identical with the "content-psychology" which he desires. Dilthey in later years uses the "intentional" language of Brentano and Husserl, but guards against a too literal acceptance of it. Each type of "intentional act" is an attitude of the whole self.

*Strukturzusammenhang*) of the mind, and the possibility of a descriptive psychology rests on the fact that this structural system is not discovered by inference or hypothesis, but is actually experienced, or "given in lived experience" (*im Erlebnis gegeben*).

What does this mean? Through the greater part of our conscious life we are engaged in cognizing and reacting to things and persons other than ourselves, and are therefore not in the centre of our own attention. Our consciousness of other things and persons is, however, normally accompanied by an "awareness" (*Innewerden*) or "enjoyment" (*Erleben*) of our own mental states, processes, and activities, which are inherently *conscious* (*bewusst*) although we have no *consciousness of* (*Bewusstsein von*) them. We see ourselves as it were out of the corner of our eye while our attention is fixed on something else. This enjoyment or awareness of ourselves is changed into inner perception by directing our attention inwards, and when we do this, the structural pattern springs into view. Of course, we do not perceive the entire ramifications of it. We perceive a fragment of it here and there, from which in course of time we learn to piece the whole together. But in these fragmentary perceptions we see not merely that one mental event follows another, but that it is its natural and appropriate successor. It is obvious to us without further thought that sorrow is the natural consequence of learning of a friend's death, and that the suffering of injury or insult leads naturally to anger, and this to a show of pugnacity. The successive events in these instances are felt to "belong together",<sup>1</sup> as Dilthey puts it, for the obvious reason that they are, and are seen to be, successive stages in the working out of a single reaction-pattern. Their unity is functional or teleological. Dilthey calls it "structural", and contrasts it with the relations established by casual association or mechanical habit, where a cause can be inferred for the connection, but no significance can be found in it. Associations can be explained inductively, but structural sequences have their meaning in themselves, and in them the essence of the mind is perceived.

Psychology is no more than the systematic elaboration of this self-knowledge which begins in common experience. It has nothing to gain by borrowing conceptions of law and causality from natural science. The experience of the structural system

<sup>1</sup> G.S., VII, 14.

within ourselves is, according to Dilthey, the source from which the idea of causality is derived ; the idea gets into our thought of nature by transposition from ourselves, and it is ludicrous to try to improve our knowledge of ourselves by re-importing it from nature. "We cannot make a system outside the one which is given to us . . . Consciousness cannot go behind itself."<sup>1</sup> Since the structural system is one of living function, our knowledge of it will not be altogether like our knowledge of inanimate objects. As in morphological studies, it will depend on the possession of an eye for the structural type. It will "always retain something of the living, artistic process of understanding".<sup>2</sup> Indeed, one of its methods for sounding the unconscious depths will be the study and interpretation of those manifestations of human achievement which Dilthey calls "objective mind", those "permanent forms with firm outlines"<sup>3</sup> in which so much that has sunk from memory into unconsciousness is still expressed for all to read. It is here rather than by introspection that the approach to the unconscious should be made. "What man is, he learns not by rummaging about in himself, nor yet by psychological experiments, but by means of history."<sup>4</sup> What cannot be cleared up in this way may legitimately be made the matter of hypotheses, providing that the hypotheses are framed as analogical extensions of the perceived structural system, and do not import into psychology entities and processes of a kind otherwise unknown there. Such hypotheses will not impair the solidity of the science as a whole, which has in the structural system "an indubitable, universally valid foundation".<sup>5</sup>

Dilthey sketches the main divisions into which a psychology erected on this foundation would fall.

(a) It would include a detailed study of the structural system, distinguishing the various elementary functions, which go to constitute cognitive, affective, and conative activity, and defining the end at which the teleology of the whole system drives. That end, regarded subjectively, can be no other than the satisfaction of all impulses, or happiness ; to equate this with the preservation of the individual and the species is a hypothesis derived from biology, not from the evidence of consciousness itself.

<sup>1</sup> G.S., V, 194.

<sup>2</sup> G.S., V, 175.

<sup>3</sup> G.S., V, 200.

<sup>4</sup> G.S., V, 180.

<sup>5</sup> G.S., V, 173.

(b) It would include a study of the laws of development, showing how capacities become refined and perfected, and how experience forms a deposit or "acquired system" which more and more informs future developments. This ground has been well covered by poets and novelists, autobiographers and biographers, and psychology must do their work over again in its own terms.

(c) The possession of a common mental structure and a common external world means that we all have certain ways of thinking and acting in common. The most general forms and fundamental presuppositions of our thought about the world, volitional relations such as end and means, obligation, co-operation, command and obedience, etc., follow directly from the nature of man and his situation in the world. Here psychology begins to lay foundations for epistemology, for moral and political theory, and for the human studies generally, and in return it can and must learn by analysing the phenomena of "objective mind".

(d) It must study the processes by which the general human type becomes specified and individuated. The foundation of individuality is not qualitative, but quantitative. The same elementary capacities and the same elementary contents of thought and will constitute human nature everywhere and always, but with infinite variations in efficiency and intensity and in the distribution of interest. These variations are partly there from birth, but are then worked upon by influences from the physical and especially the social environment, and the result is the crystallization of individual character.

(e) A proper grasp of these processes will make possible a typology of human nature, such as the human studies require. For the perfecting of this we must embark on a comparative study, using especially those records in which character and outlook and the process of their formation are most fully and clearly expressed, viz., the records of the intellectual and artistic activity of man. At this point psychological enquiry becomes dependent on a trustworthy technique of interpretation, in other words on a hermeneutic. Thus the *Ideas concerning a Descriptive and Analytical Psychology* (1894) are followed by *On Comparative Psychology* (1895) and by *The Rise of Hermeneutics* (1900).

The theory in the *Ideas* has had notable repercussions, but

as it stands it can hardly be said to have been popular with either philosophers or psychologists. Philosophers prejudiced against all psychology have found it easy to accept the destructive part of the essay and let the constructive go. To psychologists an essay written in philosophical language and reflecting a philosopher's interests can easily appear unbalanced or even wrong-headed, and it has been called both. Yet it claims to describe a change in the aims and methods of psychology which has already begun (Dilthey quotes examples from Wundt and James) and is bound to continue, and the history of psychology since 1894 gives some support to this claim.

(a) Sensationalism was already on the decline, and in the twentieth century has been replaced by a genuinely descriptive account of the mind. The Würzburg school with their "mental attitudes", "tasks", and "determining tendencies", the Gestalt school with their doctrine of the primacy of the whole, and the Bartlett-Wolters theory of "schemata" may be quoted in evidence. And while psychoanalysis has brought with it hypothetical constructions on an unprecedented scale, these are made analogically from processes known in consciousness, as Dilthey requires.

(b) Social psychology has made notable strides, and the dependence of the individual consciousness on its social context is widely recognized. The psychology of religion owes much to Ames, Durkheim, Lévy-Bruhl, and one of the tests of psychoanalytical theory has come to be its ability to account for the facts of anthropology. This verifies Dilthey's conception of the dependence of individual psychology on the analysis of "objective mind", i.e., in this case of social habits and institutions.

(c) Content-psychology comes into its own with the attempts of MacDougall and the psychoanalytical schools to determine the fundamental instincts, the psychoanalytical doctrine of archetypes and symbols, and Otto's analysis of the numinous. It may be noted that the theory of archetypes and symbols seeks verification in literature and mythology, and Otto's analysis depends very largely on literary sources. Here the method of understanding is at work, and one charge brought by opponents against the psychoanalysts is that, as Dilthey would say, they have a false hermeneutic.

(d) Jung has come forward with a typology which grows

out of his experience in psychotherapy, but seeks to account on psychological grounds for certain secular controversies in theology and philosophy and to contribute to the understanding of literature.

Most of these developments Dilthey did not live to see, and in the last years of his life he began to have doubts about the *Ideas*. Contemporary criticism and the movement of his own thought led him to modify his attitude, and he does not seem to have reached a new equilibrium before he died. He began to lay greater stress on the difficulties of introspection, its vagueness, its tendency to distort, and the wide range of unconscious activity which it cannot reach, and in particular he began to see that the details of the structural system are not as clear and obvious to ordinary observation as he had thought. He began to emphasize the dependence of self-knowledge on expression, and to defend his conception of the structural system as a triplicity of cognition, feeling, and conation by arguing back to it from common grammatical expressions and from the distinction between facts, values, and purposes. In one passage he suggests that his own terminology is a set of adequate expressions rather than of precise definitions. "Feeling and will are only concepts which are a hint to reproduce (*nachbilden*) the corresponding part of life."<sup>1</sup>

The difficulties of introspection are real, though we may think that Dilthey is unnecessarily gloomy about them. Psychology since his time has shown itself able to devise controls which go far to nullify the obstacles, and controlled introspection under experimental conditions is a very different thing from the amateur self-analysis which he first relied on and then despaired of. Be that as it may, he did despair, and the result was a change in his conception of psychology. He now draws a distinction and a contrast between his own "anthropology" or "structure-psychology" and the positive experimental science, "the science of psychology as it has taken shape to-day", or "the science of psychology in the proper sense".<sup>2</sup> About the latter he says nothing positive. It ceases to figure in his table of the human studies, though he says things which imply that it ought still to be reckoned as one of them. All his attention is given to "structure-psychology", which inherits what remain of the hopes

<sup>1</sup> *G.S.*, VII, 238.

<sup>2</sup> *G.S.*, VII, 239.

and claims of the *Ideas*. He stresses its affinity with poetry, and in one passage even seems to say that it is inferior to poetry in depth and clarity of insight. If so, it obviously cannot be the "basic science" of the human studies as he once thought. There is clear testimony that Dilthey saw this, but there is also evidence that he never abandoned the hope of such a "basic science". He was a prey to conflicting tendencies, and never came to a decision.

The idea of a psychology distinct from experimental psychology, and studying mental life from the point of view of meaning and content and types of character, has borne fruit since Dilthey's time. Beginning with Karl Jaspers, who in those days was a psychiatrist, a succession of writers have combined Dilthey's conception with hints drawn from Brentano and Husserl, from Rickert, from psychoanalysis and Gestalt theory, to produce the theory of an "understanding-psychology" or "psychology of insight" (*verstehende Psychologie, einsichtige Psychologie*) which is akin to poetry, philosophy, and the human studies, in contrast with experimental psychology, which they reckon as a natural science. Natural-science psychology, they say, takes the mind as a thing among things and studies its processes from a causal point of view, but is not interested in relations based on meaning, which Dilthey calls "structural" and Jaspers "intelligible" connections. It explains mental life from without, it does not understand it from within. The psychology which is a human study is based on understanding in both Dilthey's senses of that word, the interpretation of signs or expressions and the understanding of the part in terms of the whole. It sees the mind not as a thing, but as a thinking and willing subject. The members of the school have spent much ingenuity in exploring different senses of the verb *verstehen*, and have adopted from Rickert a distinction between *verstehen* and *nacherleben*, which in Dilthey are the same thing.<sup>1</sup> One of them, Eduard Spranger, has produced an interesting typology based upon six fundamental attitudes of the mind to its world. The attitudes are the economic or technological, the legal and political, the scientific, the artistic, the social, and the religious, and person-

<sup>1</sup> This distinction is a technicality which need not concern us: let it only be said that Dilthey's *Nacherleben* is equivalent to their *Verstehen* and not to their *Nacherleben*.



ality arises from the union of these six factors within a single consciousness. The dominance of one or other of them in a particular person gives rise to six types of outlook and character, for which Spranger claims heuristic value in the study of art and society.

What is to be said of all this?

There is no doubt that the worker in the human studies needs a conception of human nature to help him to make sense of his sources. Whatever branch of human activity he may be studying, he needs some idea of the main interests which move people in that branch of activity, of how in general people behave under the influence of these interests, of the various types of outlook and behaviour which arise in this sphere, and the influences which help to produce and maintain them, and finally of the relative efficiency of the various types from the point of view of the underlying interest. Every student has, in fact, such a conception as this, not usually derived from psychology, but worked out from personal experience and elaborated by use in application to his sources. Psychology has in it too little about the higher mental functions, and that little is often unbalanced. These things are often better understood and expressed, as Dilthey says, in reflective literature and poetry, and thither we all go to learn them. But Dilthey in the *Ideas* regards this as a temporary state of affairs, due to the immaturity of psychology. He believes that psychology must ultimately become able to cover this ground, and he tries to define the conditions which it must satisfy in order to do so. The later Dilthey and the adherents of understanding-psychology also wish to cover this ground systematically, but not by a development of the existing science of psychology. They think it must be a separate study.

It may be suggested that the human studies and philosophy are now in much the same position with regard to psychology as philosophy once was with regard to natural science. Philosophy was concerned from the beginning with questions whose solution required some knowledge of the system of nature. But since in those days the method which has made modern science possible had not been discovered, the philosophers were compelled to do their physics and astronomy as best they could for themselves. It was amateurish stuff, but it had to last until the

coming of a proper scientific method took these questions out of the philosophers' hands, and then their speculative constructions were overtaken and shattered by the progress of genuine scientific discovery. Philosophy is still reeling from the blow. Some modern philosophers are trying to recover their balance by claiming the study of the higher mental functions as their peculiar province. They man the frontier between the "psyche" and the "spirit" and hurl defiance at the psychologists on the other side. The psychologists refuse to recognize the frontier, and surely they are right. It is here as it was with natural science. Philosophy and the human studies have been carrying on with an amateur psychology of their own, or rather with innumerable amateur psychologies, one for each separate student, because the genuine psychology which could do their business had not arisen. It had not arisen in 1894 and it has not in 1943, and while we are waiting there is no harm in the philosophers and humanists doing the best they can with an understanding-psychology of their own. They are wrong if they think it will not ultimately be overtaken by real psychology, but when that happens it may not be so thoroughly shattered as philosophical physics was. It, or the best of it, may rather be absorbed. A typology like Spranger's, based on a careful study of men in society, and working back from their overt actions and achievements to the ground of these in the mind, (from objective mind to the structural system, as Dilthey would say,) may quite well survive with slight alteration and become a chapter in the psychology foretold by the *Ideas*. Dilthey's bolder thoughts would thus be justified against his fears.

## IV

The project of a positive science of society, to be called sociology, is associated historically with Comte, who thought that it was his peculiar mission to lay the foundations of this science. The subject-matter of sociology is the same as that of history, only differently studied ; where history tells the story of events, comparing and contrasting, bringing out the distinctive character and circumstances of each agent and each happening, sociology generalizes and formulates laws by which all this may be explained. It has to make clear the pattern of relationships by which men are held together in society, to distinguish within it the various types of groups and institutions, ideas and activities, which go to form the whole. This is social statics. And it has to discover the factors making for change and the laws according to which they operate. This is social dynamics. Sociology is indebted to history for many of its facts and to biology for its explanatory principles. That there could be a science of psychology Comte did not believe.

J. S. Mill took over the conception and elaborated it in his *System of Logic*. He laid the foundations in psychology, which was to give rise to ethology (a study of the formation of individual character and national and racial types, partly corresponding to Dilthey's "comparative psychology"), and this in turn to sociology. He discussed at great length the methods of this science, and added that portions of it might be broken off, as it were, and become independent sciences dealing with some one aspect of social life. Such was economics, and there could be others.

Herbert Spencer not only argued the possibility of a sociology, but wrote one on a monumental scale. His ruling principles come from biology, viz., that societies are organisms or rather super-organisms, engaged in a struggle for existence against the environment and one another, and that in this struggle evolutionary changes take place, the tracing of which is the clue to social history.

These three influences were among those brought to bear on Dilthey in his formative years. They came from the Anglo-

French side of his background, associated with empiricism and a rooted distrust of metaphysics. But from the German side came an answering influence in the shape of the philosophy of history, which played an important part in the work of the romantic and post-Kantian generation from whom he learned so much. Its inspiration was not positivistic, but speculative: that is, it sought to understand the course of history, and perhaps to "deduce" it *a priori*, in the light of a principle drawn from metaphysics, dealing with it as the nature-philosophy of Schelling and Oken did with the facts of nature. Various principles were suggested by different philosophers: "education of the human race" (Lessing), "progressive realization of the moral will" (Kant and Fichte), "progressive realization of freedom" (Schelling and Hegel). All of them explained the historical process in terms of a governing purpose, and all found this purpose in the development of the higher intellectual and moral qualities of man. These speculative constructions served as a framework within which room was found for a great deal of empirical observation and penetrating interpretation. Dilthey singles out for praise Herder's understanding of the mentality of primitive peoples and Hegel's conception of dialectic, as well as the insight of both these writers into the life of particular ages or movements. What distinguishes their work as philosophy of history, however, is the all-embracing framework itself, and this is not empirical, but derives from their metaphysical systems.

Dilthey regards both positive sociology and philosophy of history as mistakes, and indeed as the same mistake. Both try to go behind the facts of history to a single principle and to explain or interpret everything by this. Both find it impossible to do so without making their governing principle so wide and general that it becomes useless as a ground of explanation or understanding, and even so they have to go beyond experience in search of it. This applies as much to Comte with his "crass naturalistic metaphysics"<sup>1</sup> as to the professed metaphysics of the German movement. Their common fault is an artificial over-simplification, which seeks in history and society the unity of a single object instead of what is really there, the complex interaction of many and various forces.

<sup>1</sup>G.S., I, 107.

The philosophy of history looks for a meaning in the process,<sup>1</sup> and claims to find it in a governing purpose. Dilthey refuses on principle to recognize a superhuman purpose, whether placed in a transcendent God or in an immanent world-spirit or Absolute. There are no purposes in history but human purposes, the purposes of actual historical agents. And there is no all-inclusive purpose which could constitute the meaning of life. Meaning, as we have seen, is for Dilthey that unity which is intrinsic to life as such, and life is not the pursuit of a value or a purpose, though many values and purposes arise and are pursued in the course of it. Life as a whole is continually *in fieri*, always building itself into unity but not into any definable kind of unity, teleology without any *telos* but the process itself, like music, with which Dilthey likes to compare it. Within it we can distinguish aspects or spheres of activity, such as art, religion, law, politics, and each of these has a governing purpose or purposes which may be said to constitute its meaning. But these are many and various, and the more we analyse the more we find them so. An individual life may have an assignable meaning, e.g., in devotion to a cause, and so may a group, or a movement, or an aspect of social activity, but not history as a whole. All that we find there is a continual interaction between the individuals and groups, the movements and the aspects, and a resultant pattern which is never complete and which develops towards no definable end.

Positive sociology looks for a single driving force or a single law in the process, but again the facts are too complex. The only honest generalization about the driving forces of history is that they include all the forces of the human mind and all those of its physical and social environment, and that what happens is the joint product of all these. They include equally the higher activities of the mind—themselves quite various—and the lower, the impulses of power and self-seeking as well as morality and self-sacrifice, the evil as well as the good. No formula can cover all these at once. The way to understand the life of society is

<sup>1</sup> Of course if we mean by philosophy of history not an attempt to formulate the meaning of history but a critical study of the basis of historical knowledge, the case is different. Dilthey's own philosophy is a philosophy of history in that sense, as he himself acknowledges. But one main task of a *Critique of Historical Reason* is to expose the rottenness of the foundations on which the speculative philosophies of history were built.

to break it up into its component activities and study each of these by itself. Every "exact and fruitful law" hitherto discovered in this field has belonged to some such sectional study, e.g., Grimm's law in philology, or Comte's law of the successive development of the natural sciences, and the men who have advanced our knowledge of society have always been men well acquainted with some special study relating to it. Vico was a jurist and a philologist, Herder a naturalist and a historian, Turgot an economist, a natural scientist, and a historian. As the laws of nature are found by the co-operation of many sciences, so the laws of society will be found by the joint work of many social sciences, not by a single "sociology". If it is desired to bring the results of these separate enquiries together into a comprehensive picture, that picture is not sociology but history, written as history should be written with a full knowledge of the results of the social sciences, but applying this to the elucidation of the actual course of events. From history the social sciences come by abstraction, and to it they return.

The reader will probably feel that this is too sweeping. The case against philosophy of history rests on the case against metaphysics, and is not to be argued here. Dilthey's views on that question, with which the present writer substantially agrees, will be discussed in a later chapter. But the case against sociology is thin. It is based too much on particular aspects of the work of Comte and Spencer, upon Comte's readiness to reduce psychology to physiology, the eagerness of both to take over the methods of the physical sciences, and Spencer's use of social and institutional causes to explain the cultural and spiritual development of mankind. In a late note appended to a new edition of his *Introduction to the Human Studies* Dilthey lays especial stress on the last point, urging that even in morality there is something which is neither enlightened self-interest nor a response to social pressure, but a spontaneous adjustment of the individual to other individuals, and that such things as art, philosophy, or religion would continue to exist even if there were only one man left in the world. But, even supposing that Dilthey is right in this, he has no right to identify the science of sociology with a particular opinion held by some of its exponents. Its fundamental intention is to discover the patterns of all activities pursued by men in association, and their causes, whether these be found

in society or in the individuals. It overlaps with social psychology—a study in which Dilthey is interested—the psychology of the individual being of importance for sociology in so far as it affects the forms of human association, and the social influences being of importance for social psychology in so far as they affect the development of individual character and behaviour. No doubt the various activities pursued in society can and must be studied separately by separate sciences. Mill and Spencer are both explicit about this. But the various activities affect one another, and there must be a study of the total pattern. What is done for primitive societies by cultural anthropology (which is not mentioned by Dilthey in his list of human studies) can be done also for civilized societies, and to admit this is to admit sociology. We shall see later that Dilthey himself held opinions which can only be called sociological, though always refusing to recognize them as such.

He distinguishes three main types of relationships among men, which we may call physical, cultural, and political. By the physical relationships are meant those of physical descent and kinship, which in combination with the moulding influences of climatic and geographical conditions give rise to the interrelated physical types studied by ethnology. Dilthey has nothing to say about this study except that it exists, and that it is not a clue to the understanding of organized societies. The bonds which unite a people or a nation are not primarily physiological, but economic, cultural, political, historical, and the life of such a group may be divided into two sets of activities which Dilthey calls “cultural systems” and the “outward organizations of society”.

A cultural system is a group of activities in which men unite on the basis of a specific common interest and purpose. Such common interests and purposes vary greatly, and Dilthey stretches the meaning of the word “culture” to make it cover them all. The chief among them are economic activity, law, morality, art, science, philosophy, religion, language, education. All these are spheres in which an abiding human interest finds satisfaction, and a form of co-operation grows up which outlasts the generations and constitutes a social force. We are born into the midst of these cultural systems, and the greater part of our activity falls within one or other of them; sometimes within

several at once, for they overlap, and a single action may be the meeting-place of two or three of them.

When a scholar writes a book, this process may be a link in the concatenation of truths which constitutes science ; at the same time it is the most important link in the economic process which culminates in the publication and sale of copies of the work ; it has also a legal side, as the fulfilment of a contract, and it may be an element in the professional functions of the scholar as laid down by the administrative system. The writing down of each and every letter of this work is thus an element in all these systems.<sup>1</sup>

Each cultural system has some who devote their lives to it, whether through liking or to earn a living, or both, and these are its professionals or specialists. Among them will be found a few who have talent or creative genius, and it is these who are responsible for new departures and discoveries, which the rest of the specialist body take over and popularize. On the outskirts are gathered the multitude of adherents who create nothing, but in varying degrees contribute to keep up the activity and profit by its results. For the benefit of those engaged in a cultural system, organizations come into being, sometimes fluid and transient, like a chess club or a dramatic society which may be quite short-lived, and sometimes permanent over thousands of years, like the Christian Church. These organizations combine with the lasting products of the various cultural systems, such as houses, parks, roads, books, statues, theories, to act as repositories of tradition, so binding the generations together and giving to each cultural system "an outward permanence independent of the actual individuals, and a character of massive objectivity".<sup>2</sup>

One of these cultural systems is morality, or "the moral system", which consists in the shaping of impulse and character in individuals by the gradually accumulating experience of mankind, mediated through various kinds of tradition and social pressure. The basic aim of life is happiness, or the maximum satisfaction of our desires. In the course of time it becomes clear by experience that the indulgence of certain impulses tends to diminish satisfaction on the whole for both individuals and for the community, while the encouragement of certain other impulses tends to increase it. Three impulses especially are found to deserve encouragement, viz., (a) a tendency to seek to

<sup>1</sup> G.S., I, 51.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



widen, deepen, enrich and intensify one's experience, (b) a tendency to regard others with benevolence, to share experiences and activities with them, and (c) a tendency to recognize others as having inherent claims upon us, and undertakings with regard to them as binding. The value placed upon these three tendencies appears first in primitive custom, with which the individual conforms both on grounds of personal prudence and also because he understands its purpose and makes it his own. Later reflection leads to the codification of precepts and the formation of ideals and ultimately of moral theories. The range of the three moral principles is extended, the ideal of personal perfection being pushed higher, the scope of benevolence widened to take in larger and larger groups, the rights of men more and more explicitly recognized and finally fixed in law. Art and religion are brought in to express and enforce the prevailing moral outlook. Changing circumstances lead to special emphasis being placed now upon one of the three principles, now upon another, and so different types of moral outlook and theory arise and become characteristic of different peoples and periods. The present state of moral philosophy, with its competing theories based on perfection, benevolence, justice, and various combinations of these principles, is simply one of the objective manifestations of the "moral process" in the last 2500 years.

The bond of unity in a cultural system is a common interest in one aspect of human life. Therefore the divisions between cultural systems cut across those between peoples and States. Many cultural systems function side by side in one State, and all reach out across its boundaries. In contrast with these stand those associations whose bond of unity is common descent and/or territorial contiguity. These are the "outward organizations of society", and they hold men together not for the fulfilment of one function, but for the fulfilment or at least the protection of all functions, for the living of life as a whole. The oldest of them is the family, in which economic, educational, moral and juridical, and religious functions are fulfilled without serious attempt to distinguish them. From this develop the clan and the tribe, and then the State, whose unity depends on many common interests, of which racial homogeneity need not be one. The State is an organ of power, which it uses to control and protect all smaller groups and organizations within its territory. But

physical power is not the only motive on which the loyalty of its subjects is based. There are also social relationships of authority and leadership, and a strong sense of community based on common material interests, common cultural traditions, common memories and aspirations. The functions of the State are heterogeneous, and vary notably from place to place. Thus it may take into its hands the control of education, which is a cultural system, or it may let go a control which it previously had over economic or religious life. Such changes occur from time to time as circumstances require, and their result is that no precise definition of the functions of the State can be given.

Dilthey finds that law holds an ambiguous position between the outward organizations and the cultural systems. On the one hand, law is nothing unless it is the expression of a will, a public or communal will of course, which defines and promulgates it and upholds it by the threat of force. It is thus a function of the State, and of subordinate organizations within the State, and its purpose is to defend the unity and interests of society against disorder from within, as military power defends it against aggression from without. Its ruling conception is the public good, and individual and sectional rights are defined by reference to that. But on the other hand there are principles of justice and equity, often summed up in terms of "natural law", which are widely accepted and constitute a kind of public conscience, capable of standing up even against positive law itself and deeming it unjust. This aspect of law is clearly a cultural system, and is closely related to morality and religion.

These being the components into which Dilthey resolves the structure of social life, his conception of the social sciences which are to cover this field follows naturally. There must be a separate branch of study for each of the cultural systems and for the outward organizations of society, and they must all be empirical sciences like descriptive psychology. They must avoid metaphysical preconceptions, whether idealist or materialist in character, and set themselves to understand mind in terms of itself.

Dilthey makes much of the point that these sciences already exist, some with a very long history behind them, whereas "sociology" is a thing of yesterday; and whereas "sociology" is an artificial thing, sprung from the attempt to imitate natural

science in the social field, the genuine social studies have arisen spontaneously from the soil of experience in the way which is natural to this sphere of thought. Each of them arose in the first instance out of the need for guidance in some branch of practical activity ; jurisprudence out of the need to codify legal practice, moral theory out of the need to give clarity and direction to the moral life of Greece, political theory out of the turmoil of revolution, aesthetics out of controversies about education which involved the arts, and so on. Once having arisen, they became more reflective and began to seek for first principles, and ultimately became involved in abstruse enquiries far beyond their original horizon. It is noteworthy that several of them, viz., logic, ethics, political theory, aesthetics, are generally regarded as branches of philosophy and not as empirical sciences at all. Between these and such studies as economics, philology, paedagogy, or strategy, a gulf is supposed to yawn. Dilthey insists that this is a mistake. The "philosophical" disciplines have distinguished themselves from the others only by chasing the metaphysical will-o'-the-wisp of absolute principles, and in doing so they have wasted their labour. There are no absolute principles, but only the principles which arise from time to time in the course of history. Speaking of ethics in particular, Dilthey says that in its traditional form it has shot its bolt, and it cannot recover except by transforming itself into an empirical study of the "moral system", describing the facts as they appear in history and assigning to them their psychological and social causes. "The prime condition for the restoration of moral philosophy from its downfall is the introduction of the historical facts and their utilization by the comparative method."<sup>1</sup> This points to a programme such as that executed in Westermarck's *Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*.

It is interesting to see that in 1904, in a note reaffirming his disbelief in the possibility of a sociology, Dilthey makes an exception in favour of the sociology of Simmel. This is because Simmel's work is in fact on a narrower basis than that of most sociologists. It has nothing to do with the cultural and spiritual life of mankind, but only with social institutions, and these it does not study in all their historical diversity, but it describes and analyses those personal relations of co-operation, subordina-

<sup>1</sup> G.S., V, 33-4.

tion, competition, etc., which are involved in any social order simply as such. Dilthey accepts this as a part, though only a part, of what he wishes the study of social organizations to be.

Dilthey's reasons against the possibility of a sociology amount to a sociology in themselves, but not to a developed one, and we must regret that his concern for the independence of the sectional social sciences prevented him from giving proper attention to the wider questions about their interrelation. Two obvious points suggest themselves.

(a) Without quibbling over the possible meanings of the word "culture" in English or in German, we may agree that it is not satisfactory to have such widely different groups of facts as economic activity, religion, and language set down together as "cultural systems" without any attempt at sub-classification. It is not clear that the difference between economic activity and language is less than the difference between economic and political activity; yet in Dilthey economic activity and language are both cultural systems and political activity is a separate thing. We may question also whether all these entities are simple and homogeneous within themselves. Dilthey himself admits a tension between two elements in law, and points to the multiplicity of motives behind the unity of a political group. Elsewhere he has revealed a tension between two incompatible elements in what is traditionally called philosophy, and we have seen how language includes two different kinds of expression superimposed upon one another in the same words and sentences. Dilthey also insists on the multiplicity of principles at work in the moral consciousness, though we may doubt whether he has made a complete list. If this composite character of the cultural systems and the social organizations were taken seriously, we might find that some of them had elements in common. Thus in morality, in addition to a prudential element to which Dilthey does scant justice, we must recognize an element of what Buber and others nowadays call "meeting", the mutual recognition of persons as persons and the varying degrees of intimacy which can arise on that basis; and this element of meeting appears also in religion. Again, the quest for intellectual and spiritual security in absolute first principles is a common factor in religion and philosophy. Again, the tension between affective and cognitive aspects in language is reproduced in art, if Dilthey's

account of art is correct, and art shares with religion and philosophy the function of formulating and propagating *Weltanschauungen*, while philosophy shares with science and not with art or religion the aspiration towards clear definition and logical exposition. All these are points made in various places by Dilthey himself, but not drawn together into a comprehensive view. We need not deny the reality of the various cultural systems as empirical facts, or the substantial accuracy of Dilthey's description of them as far as it goes, but it looks as if on closer examination they might turn out to be surface waves and ripples produced by deeper-lying currents.

Dilthey himself has said something of the kind in the *Introduction to the Human Studies* :

The student of the phenomena of history and society is everywhere confronted by abstract entities such as art, science . . . religion. They are like masses of cloud, which prevent our vision from reaching reality, and yet are themselves intangible. As once the substantial forms, the spirits of the stars, and the essences stood between the investigator's eye and the laws which govern atoms and molecules, so these entities shroud the reality of historical and social life, the interaction of the mind-body units under the conditions of the natural world and their native genealogical articulation. My object is to show how to see this reality . . . and to dispel these mists and phantoms.<sup>1</sup>

But he has not himself dispelled them. The distinctions and classifications in the *Introduction* are to be regarded not as conclusions, but as starting-points. The purpose of the book is to call for investigation and to map its course, not to carry it out. But it is a starting-point which Dilthey did not leave behind in the next twenty years, and he could not have left it far behind without being led to a synthetic view of things which could only be called a sociology.

(b) Nor could he have long avoided the question of the interactions and mutual dependences of the factors which analysis discloses. It is not enough to say, as he does, that the factors in society all act upon one another. That is true, but even the plain man can see that some act with greater force than others. The language of a country, or its style of folk-music, have incomparably less effect upon its destiny than its geographical position and its industrial system. Which of the factors are the

<sup>1</sup> G.S., I, 42.

most influential? And are they all independent in essence, or can some be reduced to manifestations of others? The most striking and influential theory on this point is the materialist conception of history as elaborated by Marx and Engels, according to which the economic activity is by far the most influential, the moral, legal, political, and perhaps religious activities are direct products or outgrowths from it (though they acquire in the course of history a relative and limited independence and even a power to react upon economic life), and the linguistic, artistic, scientific, philosophic, educative activities are essentially distinct from the economic, but in their manifestations overwhelmingly conditioned by it. The name of Marx occurs only once in all Dilthey's writings, and his contribution to sociology passed Dilthey by. But Dilthey was acquainted with Spencer, according to whom political and religious activity spring from fear respectively of the living and of the dead, the offspring of the two together is militarism, and this ultimately creates conditions favourable to its own supersession by peaceful industry and culture. Here, too, is a pattern of interaction which deserves consideration. But Dilthey is not interested. Probably the fact that his personal concern was with the cultural activities in the narrow sense, with art, religion, philosophy, education, contributed to his indifference towards theories which emphasized the dependence of these factors upon the economic and the military.

In his last years Dilthey came nearer to the idea of a study of society as a whole of interacting elements, but characteristically he saw it not as sociology but as history. One main form which historical study can take is the description of a historical period such as the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Age of Reason, the romantic period. Such a period owes its unity not merely, and perhaps not at all, to the circumstance that a particular process with a determinate beginning and end was working itself out then, but to the presence of certain ruling ideas and modes of feeling which became dominant and found expression simultaneously in all departments of social life. Thus the Age of Reason has a common character which can be seen in its art, its philosophy, its religion, its political and social life, and the historian must show not only what this common character was, but also from what various origins it arose, what combination of factors in the different spheres and what interaction and mutual

conditioning between them established that temporary balance which is the period in question. Dilthey makes it clear that the unity of such a period is never unbroken or unmenaced. However widespread the attitude of mind characteristic of the period may be, there will always be some who keep up the ideas and habits of an earlier age, and others whose lives and outlooks are already prophetic of what is to come. Even the common outlook of the majority is the product of forces which have not ceased to operate on bringing it into existence, but continue to work below the surface and will ultimately break up its balance and overthrow its absolutes. There are tensions and discontents which will accumulate until they compel recognition. If they are recognized and met betimes there will be change, but gradual and peaceful change. If established habits and institutions refuse to recognize the discontents and become rigid against them, they will postpone change for a time, and then be swept away violently by a revolution. One way or another, every social and cultural system contains the elements which will lead to its dissolution.

In some of these remarks Dilthey has clearly Hegel in mind. Indeed, in several places he openly alludes to some of the salient Hegelian doctrines. The historical process is conceived by Hegel as the central fact in the empirical development of the universe, the whole course of which is directed towards a single end, viz., the realization of the Absolute as free self-conscious mind. The means by which this realization is brought about in man is the life of reason. Reason is the essence of the human mind, its inner substance and the deepest motive of all its activities, and from the conception of reason Hegel accordingly claims to construct *a priori* the stages through which the human mind must pass to its goal. They form a dialectic, like the categories of Hegel's "logic", and are bound together, like them, by bonds of rational necessity. Each of them is in its measure a revelation of the Absolute; but each is abstract, one-sided, and therefore in the long run leads to a contradiction. The human mind, exercised by this latent contradiction in its life, tries to mend it by rushing to an opposite extreme; but this only makes the contradiction explicit, and it is not solved until both extremes are synthesized in a richer form of life, which in turn develops an inner contradiction of its own; and so the process goes on.

Now, there is no doubt that Dilthey in his later years greatly



admired this theory. He singles it out in his *Early Life of Hegel* as the greatest achievement of that philosopher, vindicates Hegel's claim to be its sole originator, and illustrates in detail the applications which Hegel himself was able to make of it. He is aware, of course, of the great flaw in the theory, viz., Hegel's *a priori* formalism which makes him treat the movement of life as if it were wholly a movement of ideal principles, and reduce the whole body of historical and social philosophy to one element in a metaphysic of abstract forms. But he is at pains to show that this formalism is a comparatively late development in Hegel, who had reached his dialectical conception of history some years before the theory of the Absolute as pure reason and the idea of the abstract dialectic entered his mind. This later development he ascribes to the influence of Schelling, while in the historical dialectic, before it was crushed into a pseudo-logical form, he claims to find the expression of Hegel's own peculiar genius. For the greatness of that philosopher lay in his unique understanding of historical movements, and his power of coining concepts in which the living process of mind comes to expression. His attempt to represent this living process as one of pure logic led him in the end to do violence to logic, to abandon the principle of contradiction in an effort to express tension; and even so his doctrine perverted what it was meant to express. But this is not an essential part of Hegel's historical theory, and to that theory in general Diltthey gives an admiring approval.

In the first place, he admits that every state of human affairs is somehow unsatisfactory, and that this unsatisfactoriness is the motive force which drives us to change. But, to begin with, the unsatisfactoriness is not wholly due to conditions inherent in the developing human mind itself. A great deal of it is due to the natural environment, which Hegel leaves out of account. Men live in the midst of a physical world, and every attempt which they make to realize an ideal is conditioned and distorted by the pressure of physical facts. It is true that the history of mankind is the history of an increasing control over their environment; but, on the other hand, even this control can only be reached by the adoption of certain habits and attitudes of mind, so that man, even in his conquest of nature, is still conditioned by her. We can distinguish three factors in the historical process. First there are the "dead factual necessities" and the struggle for



bare life. Next there is the "highest life of the mind", the recognition and pursuit of ideals. Lastly there is the work of the intelligence (*Verstand*), which forges tools for the furtherance of human effort. Such tools may be purely material, e.g., railways and factories, or may consist in forms of human association, e.g., armies, social organizations, political constitutions, and they are all at the service both of the struggle for life itself and of the attempt to realize the ideal in life. These three factors are never found separate; and, as the realization of ideals is conditioned by the means at our disposal, the machinery and the social institutions, so these in turn are conditioned by the irrational factor of the physical environment. From this environment, by means of our constant struggle with it, has proceeded the differentiation of mankind according to race, nationality, temperament, and custom, and it is on these factors, materially conditioned as they are, that the realization of ideas and ideals in this or that period of history depends.

The Middle Age contains a system of related ideas, ruling in the various spheres. Ideas of fealty in feudalism, imitation of Christ, conceived as an obedience whose content is the other-worldly attitude of mind in face of nature by virtue of the fact of abnegation. Teleological hierarchy in science. But it must be acknowledged that the background of these ideas is the force which this higher world has no power to overcome. And this is everywhere the case. Factuality of race, locality, or balance of forces are everywhere the foundation, which can never be made spiritual. It is a dream of Hegel's that the periods represent a stage in the development of reason. The description of a period always presupposes the clear eye for this factuality.<sup>1</sup>

The doctrines set forth in this chapter are the weakest part of Dilthey's philosophy, and some may wonder why we go to this length in expounding and discussing them. Would not Dilthey's philosophy be stronger without them, and his reputation better served by keeping them in the dark? This is a natural comment, but, as I believe, a mistaken one. The fact that Dilthey has small success in dealing with sociology is less important than the fact that he deals with it, and insists that the scientific study of society, one way or another, must be developed to its highest capacity. This is one side, and the conception of historical study summarized in our second chapter is the other side, of a

<sup>1</sup> *G.S.*, VII, 287-8.

total doctrine which holds in tension the aesthetic and historical approach characteristic of the post-Kantians and the practical and generalizing approach distinctive of the empiricists, and refuses to let go of either. What this tension means for Dilthey and for us must be discussed in another chapter.

## V

In the closing section of his *Attempt at an Analysis of the Moral Consciousness* Dilthey quotes the words of Pope : " The proper study of mankind is man ". It might serve as a motto for his whole philosophy, and that in both a positive and a negative interpretation. Positively, it expresses his keen interest in the human mind and all its works, the understanding of which was a ruling passion with him all his days. Negatively, it sums up his conviction that neither in the physical world nor in the transcendent sphere of religion is it possible for man to know what it is that confronts him. Human life is not only a reality, it is the only reality directly accessible to us, and it is fit and proper that our best efforts should go into the task of understanding it. The fact that such understanding may be expected to have practical consequences in giving us greater control over our own lives is an additional reason for seeking it. On this road we pursue a double freedom : the widening and enrichment of our consciousness through the reflection in it of all the varied possibilities of experience which art and history have actualized, and the extension of our control over our destinies through knowledge of psychological and sociological laws.

This study of man is not a new enterprise to be taken in hand now. It has been going on since the dawn of intellectual life on the earth. The human studies are the long-established organs by which it is carried on, and what Dilthey is doing is merely to urge that they should be taken more seriously and prosecuted more systematically than hitherto. But when he begins to do this in the modern situation he is confronted by two problems. The first is that the human studies are still without a clear and generally agreed conception of their common aims and methods and the relations between them, comparable with that which reigns among the natural sciences ; and the second is that the natural sciences are rapidly growing in prestige and are establishing in the public mind an ideal of knowledge which is not congenial to progress in the human studies.

Two groups of philosophers have taken up this question from their respective points of view, the idealists and the empiricists, and neither could satisfy Dilthey.

*Idealism* grew up and has continued in an atmosphere of coolness towards natural science. This is true whether we make its history begin with Berkeley or with the post-Kantians. The latter had several motives for their attitude. They were associated with the romantic movement, which hated what it considered to be the drabness of the scientific view of nature. The tirades of William Blake or Wordsworth against mechanical science find a German parallel in such poems as Schiller's *Gods of Greece*. Romanticism was a search for life and colour, it exalted the intuitive above the ratiocinative, and imaginative understanding above abstract explanation. So did the contemporary historical movement, which was revolting against the eighteenth-century theories of natural law and abstract principles, and learning to understand and appreciate the wealth and variety of human life. The damaging analysis of scientific claims by philosophers from Locke to Kant was ready to hand, and was used. The result was a philosophy which laid great stress on the contrast between natural science on the one hand and art, history, and philosophy on the other. Natural science is abstract, history is concrete. Natural science generalizes, history grasps the individual. Natural science is a hypothetical account of a phenomenal world, history is real knowledge of mental reality.

This aspect of idealism has been less in evidence in Britain than elsewhere. British idealism has too much Berkeley in its veins, its campaign against natural science has been in the interests of morality, religion, and metaphysics rather than of history or art. Apart from the recent writings of Collingwood, that aspect of the tradition has been chiefly known here through the work of Croce. But in Germany since 1894 it has found vigorous expression in the philosophies of Windelband and Rickert, which cover much of Dilthey's ground, and with which Dilthey in his last years was compelled to reckon. These philosophies distinguish between two types of enquiry, the nomothetic, which looks for laws, and the idiographic, which describes and compares individuals and types. Natural science is nomothetic, history and the "cultural studies" (*Kulturwissenschaften*) are idiographic. There is of course a descriptive element in natural science, e.g., in astronomy or geography, but it is entirely subordinate to explanation. The particular case is of interest only because the general law is exemplified in it.

Likewise history and the cultural studies do not refuse to recognize general laws, but are interested in them only in so far as they help to elucidate the individual case. The cultural studies are defined as those which give a descriptive and comparative account of human activities in so far as they are governed by intellectual, moral, or aesthetic values. Thus they include many of Dilthey's "systematic human studies", e.g., philology, jurisprudence, comparative religion and mythology, art criticism, and cultural ethnology (which Dilthey does not mention). But they do not include psychology, which is a nomothetic study and concerns itself with the lower mental functions, the psyche as against the spirit, and must therefore rank as a natural science. Economics also is a natural science, and so must sociology be if a sociology on Comte's or Spencer's lines exists at all.

This was a deliberate challenge to Dilthey, but he refused to yield his ground. He maintained that the unity of the human studies, including psychology and economics, is an empirical fact which logic and epistemology must explain and not explain away. He added that the proper way to classify branches of knowledge is by subject-matter, not by method. Even if it were granted that psychology is a primarily nomothetic science, the fact that it is concerned with man would still weigh more than the fact that it shares a method with mechanics or biology. And he urged that, simply because they are all concerned with man, the human studies have one important methodological characteristic in common—their dependence on expression and understanding. The conclusion to which we are led is that the idealist approach is too *simpliste*, that it leads to drawing artificial distinctions, and that the truth about the human studies must be more complicated than it allows for.

*The empirical philosophy* comes to the human studies from a different point of approach and with different interests in mind. It is inspired by an admiration for natural science, not a suspicion of it, and sees in the positive method not a shrinking of insight but a deliverance from superstition. Its hostility or suspicion is directed against religion, philosophy, and literature, against the traditional human studies which arose so long before Galileo and which still retain so much of the aesthetic and didactic flavour that is conveyed in the term "Arts". The importation of modern scientific method into these regions is expected to have

revolutionary effects, bringing a great gain in clarity, in progressiveness, in practical effectiveness, but exposing many traditional "values" and "principles" as mere naiveties. The positivist proposes to take nothing at face value, to go behind everything to its causes, to refer the thoughts and deeds of men, even the greatest, to the situations which called them forth, and so to explain what was once uncritically admired. Thus the history of art may cease to be a series of appreciative studies of eminent men and their work, and become an explanation of why certain things were produced when they were and as they were, and incidentally of why similar things must not be expected and cannot be fruitfully attempted to-day in different circumstances. It becomes, in short, a branch of applied sociology.

The danger is that the positivist may become so interested in explaining the genesis of men's works that he may forget to understand them, and the result of that will be that he offers explanations which are inadequate to what is to be explained. Thus Buckle, in Dilthey's early years, explained the growth of democracy in northern Europe by saying that dwellers in a cold climate need a great deal of carbon in their food. (This means that they must eat animal flesh, therefore they must become hunters, therefore they become self-reliant, therefore they will not endure authoritarian government.) To-day Marxists and Freudians sometimes give examples of similar ineptitude in the explanation of historical or artistic phenomena. Dilthey's great concern, accordingly, in dealing with the empiricists, was to insist on the fundamental importance of understanding as the primary fact on which knowledge in the human studies must be built. This is not hostility to the methods of natural science where they can be used. Dilthey would have no desire at all to put an end to questionnaires and statistical surveys and Gallup polls. But he does not wish these methods to be esteemed above their worth, which in the human studies is not very high.

Thus the situation with which he is faced in his effort to write a *Critique of Historical Reason* is a complex one. He is caught between two tendencies which ought to be complementary and are in fact opposed to one another. Natural science and positivism on the one hand, romanticism and idealism on the other, represent rival ways of thinking and feeling; on the one side an alliance between the calculating intelligence and the practical

urge to plan and control the course of events, on the other the contemplative, appreciative, creative type of mind, which understands and adorns the life of mankind, but is not a directive force on any large scale. The opposing tendencies are not confined to the intellectual and artistic world, they are associated with opposite sides in the deeper struggle which has been going on since the Renaissance in the body and mind of society at large. Yet no one who really knows them both can deny that the essential quality of each must find a place in any acceptable scheme of life. Dilthey, attempting in his own mind and life a synthesis which was probably premature, has at least succeeded in showing that it is not enough to take sides, and that the synthesis is what we ought to work towards.

Dilthey's writings are full of comparisons between the human studies and the natural sciences, and the question is gone into from several points of view. Putting together the results of the various discussions, we obtain an account of the methods of the human studies which may be summed up in the following six points.

1. Natural science finds its evidence in the observation of physical things and processes, while the human studies find theirs in the understanding of expressions or "objectifications" of mind. There is common ground here, for of course the expressions are physical things and processes, though most physical things and processes are not expressions. But the two ways of approach are different, and lead to different kinds of discovery.

Our everyday world, the world of perception and common sense, is composed of objects related to one another in space and time, by likenesses and differences, and by cause-effect relationships, and common experience can trace the connections well enough to give us adequate guidance for ordinary purposes. Science, however, in search for greater detail and greater precision, has been compelled to write off as subjective first one and then another element in the object as perceived, until now the world of natural science is strikingly different from the world of common sense, and vexatious questions have arisen for philosophy concerning the sense in which either of the two can be called "real" or "objective". The scientist's own view is usually that the world of his theories is the real world, and

that the world of perception and common sense is a world of appearance generated by the response of a perceiving subject to stimuli coming from the real world.

However this may be, the position in the human studies is very different. The basic fact here is that certain objects and processes in the world of ordinary experience are perceived not merely as existing or occurring at a given place and time, but as proceeding from a mental life whose expressions or manifestations they are. We do not infer this, we perceive it, we read the life in its expressions as we read the meaning in a printed text, and so the physical expression leads us through into a dimension of being beyond itself, an inwardness and a structural system answering to our own. It is this that the human studies explore, and they reveal it as a world within a world, *imperium in imperio*, much smaller in extent than the physical order of nature, but incomparably richer in interest for us who are part of it and understand it from within. They do not all go equally deep, or trace the web of causal connection equally far afield. Thus psychology is privileged in a peculiar degree to study the complicated processes which go on in the individual consciousness and below its threshold, the vague feelings, the half-formulated ideas, the passing impulses quickly suppressed, the false starts and recoveries of balance, the indecisions and conflicts, which are the intimate reality of the individual mind. But biography knows less of these things, and history neither cares nor is able to trace them with any confidence, and for jurisprudence they are wholly irrelevant. What matters here is something different but equally important, something not private to the individual consciousness, but public property among all the minds which have anything to do with law—a set of ideas and practices which are normative in that sphere of activity and give meaning to everything that happens there. The jurist is concerned not with what goes on privately in the minds of judge and jury, counsel and prisoner, but only with the law which they are all concerned to see administered, and which is the objectively rational content of what they do. Here are two extremes between which the human studies move, the individual-subjective and the social-objective. But at both ends and everywhere between, what we discover is mind, life, meaning. Everywhere we understand before we explain, and understand more than we explain, and the analysis



which makes explanation possible is itself only possible within the framework of a continual grasp of the whole.

2. Between the world of common experience and the world of natural science is a wide gap which is not easily bridged. In common experience we take things substantially as they appear, as coloured, resonant, fragrant, continuous in space, possessing all the qualities presented to us by our senses. With objects so conceived we find it possible to work out a system of nature which gives us all the knowledge and control that we need for everyday purposes, and in ordinary life we take this view of nature for granted. For two thousand years most scientists took it for granted too, and sought by thinking harder and longer, but still on the same lines as in common sense, to build up a science of nature. The results were very poor, and the triumphant career of modern science could not begin until a revolution had been wrought in methods and assumptions, and a point of view adopted which was far from that of common sense. The new point of view dismissed as irrelevant and probably unreal everything in the object which cannot be expressed as a quantity. The so-called secondary qualities disappear, and even the primary qualities are changed ; for with the advance of knowledge it has begun to appear that matter is not continuous in space, but is compounded of very many very small particles moving very quickly through a space which is not what common sense and Euclid have led us to believe. The longer scientific research continues, the further it goes from the picture of things presented by common sense. It is a striking illustration of Dilthey's point that to-day a popular writer on natural science has found it an effective literary stroke to begin with a head-on collision between the two views, and another has written a best-seller under the title of *The Mysterious Universe*. The paradoxical character of the scientific view of nature and the artificiality of its starting-point would be better realized than they are if they were not so familiar ; but most educated people to-day have learned to live with the scientific world-picture as well as with that of common sense, and inhabit a universe which is a rough-and-ready conflation of the two.

In the human studies the case is different. The ideas and principles at work in our ordinary understanding of persons and events have proved themselves capable of development without fundamental alteration into the scientific study of man

and society. When we read the account of current events in the newspapers, or contemplate and appreciate (say) a Matisse, and then pass from these things of the here and now to work out a sociology or a political theory, or a historical and critical study of post-impressionist painting, our thinking does not change in logical character, it does not dismiss as unreal or irrelevant things which we had been taking seriously hitherto, or take to itself new and challenging principles of method. It widens its range, it acquires a new persistence and depth and a new degree of critical caution, but it is still the same kind of thinking as we use in the concerns of every day. The continuity is perfect from daily experience to autobiography, biography, and history, and from everyday reflection on human nature to psychology and the social sciences. And as the human studies grow thus easily out of ordinary experience, they are more sensitive than the natural sciences to the effects of contemporary social conditions. Thus French society in the *grand siècle*, depending on the Court and governed more by men than by principles, could not encourage a systematic psychology or jurisprudence, economic or political theory, but could and did produce a host of memoirs and empirical treatises on the characters and passions of men ; these treatises affected the poetry of the time, and through that, in turn, the philosophers and the historians. Thus the whole body of the arts and the human studies together reflect the general experience and outlook of their age. Add to this that the human studies owe much of their stimulus to practical needs ; we have seen how the social sciences arose in the first instance out of such needs, and it is in fact impossible to write history, political theory, aesthetics (to name only three) without reference to current problems and movements, and the result will show evidence of this preoccupation even if it is not deliberate propaganda for one point of view. Again, whereas the object of the natural sciences, the physical world, stood complete before them from the outset, the human studies have had to watch their object grow through the centuries, and as long as history continues we shall have new possibilities of experience finding realization as new circumstances call them forth. The political theorist of Plato's day had much less experience to draw upon than we. The object has grown, and the study with it, and of course the study has also in some measure reacted upon the object ; for this too

is distinctive of the human studies, that they tend to make themselves true by influencing human action. Further, as the object changes and we with it, it becomes harder and harder to avoid reading our own thought and experience into the minds of earlier generations, and so the facts themselves become distorted by the psychological distance at which we stand from them.

For all these reasons the human studies are incapable of the same objectivity and precision as the natural sciences. The newcomer to these disciplines finds them, in Dilthey's words, "standing over against him as a chaos of relativities".<sup>1</sup> This is not to say that they have no standards of precision or objectivity at all. The scepticism which says so is cheap and ignorant. But they are inferior in this respect to the natural sciences, and this is the price they pay for their greater concreteness and nearness to the wealth and colour of common experience.

3. The units out of which natural science builds up its world are hypothetical constructions, divested of all sensuous quality, unperceived and imperceptible, and nothing is known or can be conceived of them but the relations in which they stand. In themselves they are strictly homogeneous. One atom is exactly like another atom of the same element, they react identically in identical situations, they have no known individuality at all. The laws which govern them are also hypothetical constructions, abstractly formulated with great precision and verified by experiment, but telling us nothing of the inner nature of the units or the character of the influence which they have upon one another.

In the human studies it is the other way round. The units here are individual minds, real, concrete, known to us as they are, and the only realities which are so known. We are ourselves such units, and perceive our own inner structure, and in understanding we transpose this into others, and so are able to follow the course of their inner life. By the same means we also understand how they influence and respond to one another, since in ourselves we experience what it is to exert influence and also to receive it, and we transpose these experiences also into the others whom we understand. Further, our knowledge of the structural system gives us the clue to the fundamental law of their interactions, for these also proceed according to the same pattern

<sup>1</sup> *G.S.*, I, 413.

which obtains within a single mind. As an idea arising in one mind can arouse feeling and desire in that same mind, so also the same idea, expressed by the one mind and understood by others, can evoke feelings and desires in them, and become a social force. Thus through the medium of communication the structural system expands until it includes the whole world of minds in a web of constant interaction, and we understand and experience in ourselves the nature of these relationships.

The expansion of the structural system is the sober truth behind the high-sounding theories which try to account for the unity of social groups by appealing to a "group mind" alleged to be distinct from the minds of individuals. It is a speculative theory, going far beyond the range of possible verification, and it is by speculative philosophers such as the post-Kantian idealists that it has most often been put forward, though psychologists have also had a hand in it. Dilthey dismisses it as methodologically unsound. But it is no sounder to recoil from the group mind theory to the opposite extreme represented by the individualism of Hobbes and Bentham, for which the relations between individual human beings are at bottom fortuitous contacts, and all social co-operation the aggregate of many individual self-centrednesses. This too is really a speculative theory, for it is derived from an excessive preoccupation with atomic physics and not from genuine empirical study of human life. Both theories offend against Dilthey's principle of "understanding life (which means human life as seen in history and society) in terms of itself".<sup>1</sup> The human studies must and can draw their explanatory principles neither from metaphysics nor from natural science, but from a descriptive analysis of what we actually experience. The first thing revealed by such analysis is the structural system, which operates as has been shown not only within the individual mind, but also between minds, and so constitutes the link which makes communication and association possible. On this basis groups of people live together in community with one another, and within such groups there is an increasing tendency for the individual to come to regard the interests of the group as his own, to think and feel and act for it as well as for himself, and in short to develop what is called public spirit. It is in this that group solidarity consists, and of course it can go so far as to entitle us

<sup>1</sup> *G.S.*, V, 4 et al.

to speak of the group as having a collective memory and will, and acting as an individual. These phrases are all right as metaphors, but not as literal truth. The truth behind them is the structural system.

The present-day reader will observe that the group mind theory in the form given to it by Durkheim after Dilthey's death does not offend against Dilthey's canon. It is not a hypostatization of the group, but a recognition of the truth that the mere fact of being together in a group in certain circumstances has a powerful effect on the consciousness of all the individuals concerned. The processes by which this result is brought about can be described in terms of Dilthey's structural system. On the other hand, the collective unconscious of Jung, which is alleged to be carried by physical inheritance, which is a biological hypothesis and very doubtful even as such, would meet with no recognition from Dilthey.

4. In early times, when the human studies were still young, this knowability of their units and relationships told in their favour, and enabled them to reach a state of what Dilthey calls "classic perfection" in some branches while the natural sciences were still in their first clumsy beginnings. During the two thousand years between the Ionian physicists and the revolution in method in the days of Galileo, the natural sciences went fumbling about and making little progress. But in history and political theory, in grammar and rhetoric and literary criticism, the ancients were able to do work which can still teach us something to-day. On the other hand, when once the revolution in natural science had been wrought, the study of nature went ahead with unprecedented rapidity and power, and the human studies have fallen behind. Not that they have failed to make progress of their own. Since the middle of the eighteenth century the writing of history has undergone a revolution which Dilthey is not alone in comparing with the earlier revolution in natural science. New studies have grown up, archaeology and pre-history, comparative philology, comparative religion and mythology, ethnology, psychology, economics, sociology, which together cover the world of mind with a completeness and a consciousness of method and purpose that is quite new. But these new studies have not been marked by that general agreement among those at work in them which is so striking a feature

of natural science, their progress is slower and their impact upon everyday life immeasurably weaker. Why is this?

It is because the method of natural science, though hard to discover in the first place, is of a character which reduces doubt and error to a minimum. The technique of exact measurement and experiment can verify hypotheses of a surprising subtlety and complexity, and more than compensates for the remoteness of the hypotheses from perception and common sense. This method cannot be applied with the same success in the human studies. Minds and their states and processes are not quantities as material things and their states and processes are, and the application of measurement to them has to be indirect and incomplete. Experimentation labours under difficulties. And the individuals who are our units are really individual, i.e., heterogeneous, no two being precisely alike in any respect. The result is that the discovery of general laws, which is the greatest triumph of natural science, is hardly possible in the human studies. Experimental psychology can do it for the lower mental functions, sensation and the reflexes, economics can do it for the quantitative aspects of production and exchange, but over the greater part of our field we have only empirical generalizations, expressing tendencies which operate by and large, imprecise in form and open to exceptions, instead of the precise experimental laws of natural science.

Dilthey points out that the natural sciences themselves are not all alike in this respect. The traditional inductive logic, which almost identifies science with the discovery of laws, draws its most striking examples from the sciences of inorganic nature, but in biology a different element begins to make itself felt. Not that organic phenomena are in fact less conformable to law than inorganic, but that we find it easy and interesting to study them also by a different method, the comparative method, which is a descriptive study of types. There has always been a tendency, whose history Dilthey traces in *On Comparative Psychology*, for the comparative method to pass over from biology into the human studies, and in recent times it has been used with conspicuous success in founding new branches of enquiry, viz., philology and comparative mythology. Dilthey thinks it is indispensable throughout the human studies, though he does not define them in terms of it as Windelband and Rickert do. The defining

characteristic of the human studies is understanding and the interpretation of expressions.

This is because Dilthey recognizes a further truth. The comparative method, just as much as the search for laws, is a way of generalizing, and natural science, even when using comparative methods, still cares for the type first and for the individual mainly as a case of it. But the human studies find an absorbing interest in the individual as such. It is the individual that is the immediate object of understanding (*das Verstehen*), and the human studies find their centre of interest not in generalizations based on this, but in the "loving understanding (*Verständnis*) of the personal, the reliving (*Nacherleben*) of the inexhaustible totalities"<sup>1</sup> which are individual persons and groups. That is not to say that we do not generalize, seeking types and even laws so far as we are able; but these discoveries are not allowed to rest in themselves, they are used to enrich and clarify our understanding of the concrete facts of history.

5. It is generally recognized that the natural sciences have no interest in judgments of value. Their *Wertfreiheit* is one of their most treasured attributes. It is regarded as the bulwark of their objectivity and impartiality—if impartiality is the proper word for a determination to keep right outside the field of dispute. Some would have the human studies purchase objectivity at the same price, but this, says Dilthey, is contrary to their very nature. All thinking in the human studies is axiological. They select their facts and formulate their questions from the standpoint of value. This blunt statement will evoke different responses in different readers. Some will be surprised, some will be incredulous, and some will accept it as evidence that the human studies cannot claim to be really knowledge.

Let us examine what it does and does not mean.

Every human action is an attempt, deliberate or not, to achieve some end or purpose. What tends to further our ends we call good, what tends to frustrate them we call evil, and this is the basis of our standards of value. The understanding of human beings is inseparable from the understanding and even the provisional acceptance of their value-standards; for to understand a man's action involves understanding his purposes, and judging of his success or failure in carrying them out, i.e.,

<sup>1</sup> G.S., V, 266.



in achieving the values which he has set before himself. It is the same when we understand a social group, a nation, a historical movement, or anything else that can come before us in historical and social study. In every case we find men acting under the guidance of their own conceptions of value, and we take note of these conceptions and compare purpose with execution. Our own value-standards play a part also, for it is they which determine our choice of subject in the first place. No one can study the whole of history or society, we have to select. No one can tell all that he knows about the thing which he has studied. He has to select and edit. In both cases we select what we consider to be important, either intrinsically or by virtue of its wider bearings; and in the last analysis our standard of importance is our standard of value. We judge a thing important if, and in proportion as, it affects the achievement or maintenance of what we consider valuable. Anything else we dismiss. Thus in two ways value lies at the basis of the human studies. The recognition and pursuit of values by historical agents is an integral part of what we study, and the direction and the manner of our study are determined by the values which we ourselves recognize.

This does not mean that we must never study anything but what we consider good. The realm of value includes evil as well as good. Failure, frustration, even deliberate refusal to recognize values are as interesting as achievement and lofty inspiration. Earthquakes and famines, plagues, wars, which afflict a people or destroy a civilization, are as important for the damage they do as economic, political, cultural or religious achievements are for their inherent value.

Nor does it follow that the student must distort the facts to fit his personal prejudices. Suppose he is studying the French Revolution. Here is an event upon which judgments have varied and still vary with no small violence. But one thing is agreed between those who approve, and those who disapprove, and those who have no decided opinion—that, good or bad, the Revolution was at any rate no mean event, but highly important and worthy of study. Now, it is clear that those who were concerned in it had decided views of their own, for and against, and these views are known and can be understood by one who is willing to examine the evidence. If we do this, and



if we do not merely register the fact that *X* held this view and *Y* held that, but enter imaginatively into their views and so into the actions and sufferings which were their outcome, we shall end by reliving the Revolution from within as we do the plot of a well-written play. We shall see the events at every moment in the light of value-standards, but of value-standards native to the process itself. It will interpret and judge itself for us. To such an understanding it is not necessary for us to add a judgment of our own, framed from our personal point of view and from our own perspective in time, and if we do, our judgment will not be absolute or infallible ; but it will be wiser in proportion as we have already understood the process from the point of view of the agents concerned in it.

6. Lastly, we come to what Dilthey calls the architectonic of the human studies. We saw how he had learned from Comte to see the natural sciences as a pyramid, the base consisting of mechanics (or mathematics according to Comte himself), the study of the simplest and most widely prevalent type of law in nature, and the higher levels dealing successively with more complex laws and covering a narrower range of phenomena. The laws of the higher levels are superimposed upon, but do not abrogate, those of the lower levels ; and so the sciences are logically dependent upon one another, the simpler being always prior to the more complex. Comte had reduced the human studies to the single science of sociology and added this as a crowning story to the scientific pyramid. But Dilthey dissents from this.

The human studies cannot be a continuation of the hierarchy of the natural sciences, because they rest upon a different foundation : not observation of physical events, but understanding of expressions. And while the structure of the physical world is hierarchic, and this fact is reflected in the scientific hierarchy, the structure of the world of mind is not hierarchic, and the relations between the human studies must accordingly be different. They are relations of "mutual dependence", and Dilthey traces them throughout the human studies and the cognitive processes on which they rest. Inner experience and the understanding of others are mutually dependent ; for we can neither understand others except by projecting ourselves into them, nor see ourselves clearly without the comparisons afforded

by our understanding of others. Self-knowledge and understanding of others are together presupposed in any attempt to find general truths, and yet the general truths throw a new light upon self-knowledge and understanding, which is indispensable if these are to reach their full efficiency. Common experience is the basis of art and yet receives a new breadth and clarity from art. Art in turn coins ideas and phrases, registers insights, and in various ways stimulates the development of the human studies, which react in obvious ways upon art. Among the human studies themselves, biography and history support one another, the one giving deeper intimacy and concreteness of detail, the other pointing to the wider system of processes in which the individual is involved ; individual psychology and the social sciences complement one another in much the same way ; and the whole historical-biographical approach to the facts is both debtor and creditor in relation to the generalizing-systematizing approach. It should follow that there is no logical order in which the human studies must reach maturity, but that they must develop side by side. It should also follow that there is no one human study which is the *grundlegende Wissenschaft* or basis for the rest.

We have seen in Chapter III that Dilthey did not always admit this. At various times in his life he made attempts to classify the human studies and to exhibit their interrelations, and each time he was defeated by a conflict within his own thought, a conflict traceable ultimately to the double influence under which his mind was formed. The influence of the historical movement, of romanticism, of the idealist philosophers, told in favour of an aesthetic-hermeneutic-critical standpoint, from which the historical-critical-normative branches of human study would naturally appear predominant, and the generalizing sciences would appear as under-labourers (in Locke's phrase) clearing the ground for these. The influence of empiricism and positivism went in the opposite direction. It made the generalizing-explanatory sciences appear as a solid foundation without which the cultural studies must hang in the air. In the last resort the romantic-idealist influence was the stronger of the two, but the positivist influence made a strong fight, and the result is seen in the inconclusiveness which dogs all Dilthey's attempts to arrange the human studies according to a pattern.

Thus in the *Introduction to the Human Studies* of 1883 the whole edifice is made to rest on psychology, which together with the generalizing social sciences receives much more space than biography and historiography. Yet at the end we are told that the synthesis which some would seek in sociology is really to be found in history, written "philosophically", i.e., with full consciousness of the results of the special sciences, and the aesthetic and cultural values of history are stressed. In the *Critique of Historical Reason* of 1910 the human studies are made to arise out of lived experience by way of autobiography, biography, and history, the generalizing sciences of society are recognized as important but subordinate, and there is considerable doubt as to where psychology comes in and what it is to be like. Much is heard of hermeneutics, which is given a place not altogether unlike that which mathematics holds in the natural sciences.

This indecision in Dilthey's attitude reflects an important fact about the present state of the human studies. A cleft has opened between the humanities and the social sciences. By the humanities I mean the linguistic and literary studies, classical and modern, together with art history and criticism, and by the social sciences I mean psychology, anthropology, economics and kindred studies, human geography, and sociology. The former group has much of the spirit of the scholarship which dominated the Renaissance. It concerns itself with the tangible records of the cultural life of the past, it keeps alive the memory and tradition of culture; its fundamental conception is that of expression, and its fundamental process is that of interpretation; it is here that Dilthey's remarks about understanding and the art of hermeneutics are most obviously in place. The spirit of the latter group is more akin to that of natural science. It concerns itself with the forces which keep the historical and social process at work, and through knowledge of these forces it hopes to explain the past and influence the future; while no more able than the first group to dispense with understanding and interpretation, it is more interested in the various types of causal relationship which appear in the historical process; from a practical standpoint, it trains people less for culture than for social work and administration. History stands in a manner between these two groups, able to ally itself with either. On the one hand, to meet the languages and literatures, we have cultural history, or *Geistes-*

*geschichte* ; on the other hand, to meet the social sciences, we have social and political history. The line of demarcation, of course, between the two types of history, is vague and uncertain. Nor are the language and literature group and the social science group so far different that they cannot meet at points and throw light upon one another, or join together to enrich the historian's knowledge.

These relationships raise important questions for the educational world, which is bound to seek an adjustment between the two groups of disciplines, and does not find it easy. On the one hand the humanities are conscious of a long tradition and brilliant past achievements, and not without a tinge of aristocratic feeling (intellectual aristocracy, of course) which prides itself on the possession of creativeness and insight beyond the ordinary. They are apt to see only a base popular upstart in the social sciences, which share something of the dry matter-of-fact tone of the natural sciences, are lacking in uplift and personal intimacy, and so come under the suspicion which so many humanists feel for the natural sciences themselves. A theory like Rickert's, which gives logical grounds for dividing between the cultural studies and the social sciences and for calling the latter natural science outright, answers to a feeling which is widespread among people to whom Rickert is not even a name.

Dilthey stands firm on the other side with his insistence that methods are accidental and subject-matter essential, that as man in all his being is one entity, in his reflexes and his senses and emotions, his thoughts and purposes and creative imagination, his character and outlook, his economic, cultural, social, religious aspirations and achievements, so the study of man must be one study, in spite of all complexities and divergences within it. Both in research and in teaching a positive adjustment must be found between the humanities and the social sciences. Seen in this light, the question of the architectonic of the human studies is no dry pedantic subtlety, but the expression of a practical need.

Dilthey keeps the question before us, but he does not fully answer it. He tells us how history and the arts can widen and intensify our consciousness, revealing unsuspected possibilities of experience, setting us free from the limitations of our age and circle. And he presents the social sciences as the means of fulfilling the dream of the Age of Reason, that knowledge might

become a power for good in social life. These are handsome tributes to both parties, but they remain two parties. How can we find them a common ground?

The benefit to be got from education may be summed up perhaps in the two words: knowledge and wisdom, where knowledge means factual information and technical skills, and where wisdom means value-standards and archetypes, social attitudes and adjustments. Now, the humanities are often exalted, by others as well as their professional advocates, as possessing a peculiar fund of wisdom, and the sciences, whether natural or social, are correspondingly depreciated as imparting mere knowledge. There is enough truth behind this view to make it plausible. It is true that the linguistic and literary studies, properly pursued, can cultivate sensibility and judgment in aesthetic perception and in the use of language. Whether they confer these same qualities in the conduct of life is more doubtful, but it is true that the art and literature which the humanist studies are vehicles in which the wisdom of the past has found vivid expression, and the student is brought into contact with this wisdom and may absorb it if he is able. It should be added that the humanities may become something much less worthy than this. They may become a mere field for the display of virtuosity in the techniques of scholarship—which, taken simply as techniques, are no more worthy of esteem than the technique of building bridges or breeding pigs, and much less useful than that of treating neurotic patients.

If the humanities at their best make contact with the treasured wisdom of mankind, may it not be said that the social sciences study the soil of life and circumstance from which this wisdom grows? And if they do this, they can surely deepen and enrich this wisdom by making us more fully aware of its context and motives? But of course this depends on how the social sciences are pursued. We shall not get this result if they become a mere register of facts and administrative dodges, but only if they involve understanding and reliving the processes which they study. Social science pursued in this spirit is both a discipline and a humanity, and is rich in wisdom. Such a book as Lewis Mumford's *Technics and Civilization* may serve as illustration.

If, as Dilthey himself believed, the social problem is the supreme problem of this age; and if, as he did not say, the

essence of the social problem is to make the machinery of economic and political life responsive to the will of an enlightened and purposeful people ; and if this cannot be done without an education which gives knowledge and wisdom alike to all in the measure of their capacity ; then it surely follows that we must welcome wisdom from whatever quarter it comes, and bind together in a meaningful unity every discipline which can mediate it. To this end the interests of education and of society itself call for an effort to carry further in thought and act Dilthey's conception of the unity of the human studies.

## VI

Modern philosophy is philosophy in crisis. Its history is one long tale of challenges, emergencies, and attempted fresh starts. As time goes on, it becomes increasingly evident that the crisis affects not this or that philosophical doctrine or principle, but philosophy itself, which is now challenged to show reason why it should continue to exist. Dilthey is one of those who have helped to bring the issue to a head, and of this he himself is fully aware. He speaks of himself as in search of a new way of philosophizing, and calls for a radical reassessment of the tradition.

He draws his inspiration, as usual, from two sources : from Kant, and from the Anglo-French empiricists, and his starting-point lies in what these have in common. They are united in an attack upon what had been the very heart of the philosophical tradition, upon metaphysics, the science of being and of first principles. From the time of Plato, if not earlier, until modern times, this science had been the hinge upon which philosophy turned. To it logic and epistemology led up. From it the principles of morality and social life were deduced. Its ultimate object was God himself, the highest of beings and the centre and source of all values, and the knowledge of him was the crown of intellectual attainment. For two thousand years this tradition stood, but in modern times new influences were brought to bear. The new scientific consciousness began to set traditional doctrines in a different light, and metaphysical principles began to be called in question. In the light of the new knowledge, Kant and the empiricists agree that the traditional metaphysic, for all its apparent solidity, was really a mirage, whose illusory nature and whose causes in the human mind are now at length detected. We now know that we can know nothing outside the perceived world in space and time, and philosophy must find a new focus, not in a dogmatic science of being, but in a critical study of the conditions which make experience possible. Epistemology replaces ontology.

Dilthey, deeply influenced by both the critical schools, accepts without question their common basis. He expresses himself by preference in Kantian language. In 1867 in his

inaugural lecture at Basel he proclaimed himself Kant's disciple, and at the end of his life he defined his task as the filling of the gap which Kant had left by his failure to include historical knowledge in his critique. Yet there are points on which he agrees with the empiricists against Kant and his followers, and others on which he strikes out a line independent of both.

He sides with the empiricists on the question of the relation between epistemology and psychology. Locke and his successors base their philosophy on an empirical study of the mind ; but Kant and the Kantians declare this to be logically vicious, and claim to set up an *a priori* transcendental science of first principles which is prior to all empirical enquiry. We met this controversy at the beginning of Chapter III, and saw there the reasons which determined Dilthey to side with the British school. We need not repeat them here.

On two further points, however, he denounces both the Kantians and the empiricists, finding their methods abstract and remote from reality.

In the first place, they treat the various factors in mental life too much in isolation, as if thought were not deeply bound up with feeling and both with desire and action. In particular, logic and epistemology continue to seek the foundations of knowledge and belief in sensation and thought instead of in the active commerce of the whole mind with its world. The post-Kantian philosophers, emphasizing and indeed overemphasizing the importance of the activity of the mind, have conceived it in terms of one or other of its "faculties", as reason (Schelling, Hegel) or will (Fichte, Schopenhauer), instead of advancing to the structured *totality* which is life. Cognition, feeling, conation are not separate activities of distinct parts of the self, but different *attitudes* each involving the *whole* self ; and it is by such attitudes, affective and appetitive as well as intellective, that the questions we ask and the principles we recognize are determined.

In the second place, even a totality-psychology is not the whole truth about the mind, because it leaves out the influence of historical and social conditions. The British empiricists, Hume the historian and the utilitarians with their social interests, should have seen this, but they were all spell-bound by the triumphs of natural science ; they accepted the pure "disinterested" researcher at his own valuation and made him the



archetype of *homo sapiens*. Hegel understood that thought has a history, that every individual thinker is a link in a process which began long before him and reaches out far beyond him, that in a sense the only real thinker is humanity as a whole; but he conceived the historical development as moved primarily by intellectual forces, as the free self-disclosure of the universal Idea, and not as the outcome of an all-in struggle between a man who is not pure reason and a world which is not the Idea made manifest. The truth is that all thought, like all action, is of its place and period, and this applies not only to superficial impressions, prejudices, conventions, or beliefs about matters of fact, but also to the principles upon which all thought is based. First principles also have a history and a geographical distribution. In the second book of the *Introduction to the Human Studies* Dilthey writes the history of European philosophy from this point of view, showing not only the birth, growth, and decline of the "metaphysic of substantial forms" which replaced primitive mythology and is in turn being replaced by positive science, but also the social conditions in and from which the process arose.

For Dilthey, the question of the nature of philosophy is itself a psychological and sociological question, and in *What is Philosophy?* and in many later essays and sketches he faces the question with his structure-psychology in one hand and his historical knowledge in the other. He finds that philosophy arises inevitably out of the development of experience and thought, that it has an important function to perform for individuals and for society, but that it has hitherto gone about its task in a way which was self-defeating.

1. Man thinks, feels, and desires. These are different attitudes of the same man to the same world, and each of them sees the world in a peculiar light and subsumes it under peculiar categories. Thus in thought we see the world as a system of facts, i.e., things and processes, which are what they are independently of the knowing subject, and we try to know the truth about them, to distinguish reality from appearance. In feeling we find that the world is full of values which we appreciate and enjoy or disvalues which we suffer and endure, and we aim at the fullest value, pleasure, or happiness. In desire and will we see the world as a theatre for action, we project ends into it, and make its contents into objects of pursuit or avoidance. From these

three basic attitudes come all the activities of men, and from these activities pursued in collaboration come the cultural systems and the social organizations. Each of them takes its norm from the underlying attitude: as science aims at truth, law and political and economic activity at the achievement of various practical ends, and so on. And each has a technique and a set of guiding principles.

In a simple or a stable society there is little conflict or controversy about these principles. They are codified by tradition, oral or written, and handed on from generation to generation. But social changes bring questions and conflicts, and the techniques and guiding principles are made the object of conscious reflection. This, as we saw in Chapter IV, is the origin of the human studies, of jurisprudence, political theory, economics, art criticism, and the rest. Now, these may be pursued with varying degrees of persistence and thoroughness. One writer may be content to clarify and defend his own practice and principles, while another pushes the enquiry back to origins and tries to resolve controversies by going behind them to principles which are universally valid. The latter has crossed the boundary of philosophy. It is a boundary very hard to draw in particular cases, but the principle underlying it is simple. Wherever the enquiry into any human activity raises the question of absolute, unconditional, ultimate first principles, whether native to that activity considered by itself or derived from its function in relation to the rest of life, that is philosophy. This is the origin of logic and epistemology (seeking ultimate principles of truth and reality), aesthetics (seeking absolute principles for that value which we call beauty and also for the expression of truth in art), moral and political theory (seeking absolute principles for conduct).

2. Man thinks, feels, and desires. The same man does all three of these things all the time. In his life these three threads are not separate, but interwoven, and all three together constitute his total adjustment to life. Yet each of the three, as we saw, has its own peculiar categories and sees the world in its own way. Life cannot be a unity unless these three ways of seeing the world are somehow combined, and their peculiar categories reconciled under the control of a single principle. What principle this is will depend on the relative strength of the three

attitudes in a given mind ; but one way or another, by subordination of two of them to the third or by some kind of combination or equipoise, in every mature mind a unity is established, and this unity is what constitutes a man's outlook (*Weltanschauung*).

The word *Weltanschauung* has received wide currency in recent years, not always with a clearly defined meaning. Dilthey, who is chiefly responsible for its popularity, analyses a *Weltanschauung* into three structurally connected elements. The first is a belief about the nature and contents of the world of facts ; the second, built on this foundation, is a system of likes and dislikes, expressed in value-judgments ; and the third, resulting from the two preceding it, is a system of desires and aversions, ends, duties, practical rules and principles. This comprehensive system of ideas and habits of thought, feeling, and will, results from the joint operation of the three basic attitudes, and the character of the *Weltanschauung* will vary according as one or another of the three is predominant in it. If the cognitive function is predominant, the man will pride himself on his "realism", will find his highest value in clarity of mind, and will take pleasure in reducing value-judgments and imperatives to statements of psychological fact. This is a recognizable type. So is that in which feeling predominates, and the man singles out those aspects of the universe which most appeal to him, its beauty and its harmony, and makes them clues to its real nature and meaning. The man in whom will is dominant will see the world of fact as the manifestation of a creative power, existing to be a theatre for human action, he will see truth not as cognitive clarity, but as the moral duty of sincerity or honesty, and objective existence as a set of conditions imposing themselves on action. In each case the categories of one basic attitude will swallow up the rest, and so a unity of outlook is achieved.

This growth is natural and inevitable ; but it is powerfully assisted by the conscious endeavour to solve what Dilthey calls the riddle of life, i.e., the problems relating to birth and death, joy and sorrow, love and hate, the power and the weakness of man and his ambiguous position within nature. These questions agitate all reflective minds, and the awareness of them and of the vast issues which they open up for speculation is called by Dilthey the metaphysical consciousness. In it lies the *punctum saliens* of every *Weltanschauung*.

The metaphysical consciousness finds opportunity to utter and develop itself in three of man's activities, viz., in religion, art, and philosophy. This sounds at first like an echo of Hegel's famous triad, but Dilthey's teaching is independent of and very different from Hegel's. Art, religion, and philosophy in Hegel are not only ways of expressing and developing the metaphysical consciousness, but ways of reaching ultimate truth. This pursuit of ultimate truth is not only something that can happen in the three activities, it is the essence and originating motive of them all. And they can be arranged in an order of adequacy, with art at the bottom and philosophy at the top. These views are characteristic not only of Hegel, but also of his disciples, including writers as independent in matters of detail as Collingwood. But they are not characteristic of Dilthey, who dissents from them all.

He sees the essence of religion in man's attempt to make contact with the unseen. Behind the processes of nature, behind both its regularities and its incalculable accidents, behind the facts which constitute the riddle of life, we come (never mind how) to recognize hidden forces at work, immensely powerful and in some way intelligent, and it is mere prudence to try to get into touch with these forces for our own good. Ritual and magic, with a mythology setting forth the presuppositions on which these are based, constitute the earliest form of religion. Later comes the individual of genius who develops the inner life, the ascesis of prayer, contemplation, ecstasy, and the life of communion with his righteous god; and with him comes also the theorist who brings the scattered conceptions of mythology together into a coherent and reasoned system of theology. Behind all these various activities is the pressure of material needs, but not only of these. The metaphysical consciousness is also at work, and every theology is in its way an answer to the riddle of life.

The essence of art is imaginative creation, which serves to express and communicate the artist's insight into typical forms, characters, and situations, and to evoke and harmonize emotion. To the public the greatest gift of art is a quickening of vision and a widening of the range of understanding. Obviously the artist is the kind of man who is likely to take the riddle of life seriously and work his way towards a solution; and if he does, the result will come out in his art even if he does not deliberately set himself

to advertise it. Dilthey finds it to be characteristic of the artistic mind that it seeks "to understand life in terms of itself" rather than in terms of the supernatural. Not that art has not had a distinguished career in the service of religion; but that is because religious ideas and experiences are after all aspects of human life, just as interesting and significant as any others, and the artist as such is concerned with them from that point of view. He sees the problems of life and conceives his solutions always in terms of human activities, human relationships, human destinies.

The essence of philosophy is the search for absolute first principles, and we have seen how it looks for them in every department of life and thought. But in so doing it is brought up against the problem of unity; for of course it discovers different first principles in the different departments of life, because different basic attitudes underlie them, and thus philosophy is left with several sets of categories on its hands which must somehow be brought into relation. Here is the origin of *metaphysics*, which is the philosopher's attempt to find a systematic unity, embracing the absolute reality, the absolute first principle of knowledge, absolute good, absolute right, and absolute beauty; to reconcile the regularity which he finds to be absolutely presupposed in natural science with the freedom which is equally presupposed in ethics; and in general to bring all departmental truths together in one absolute truth. Being what he is, the philosopher undertakes not merely to do all this, but to make a science of it, to present the result as a watertight logical system with precise definitions and demonstrative arguments.

The task which philosophy sets itself, both in the grand synthesis of metaphysics and in the departmental studies, is beyond human capacity.

1. (a) The core of every metaphysic is its conception of the Absolute, i.e., of that which is both the supreme reality and the supreme value, and unconditional in both aspects. In the main European tradition this has always been God, the transcendent personal cause of the universe. But such a reality is beyond experience, and can only be approached indirectly. We have no source of knowledge apart from experience, and if we are to think of something outside the range of observation, we must conceive it on the analogy of something which can be observed, and establish its existence by showing that some undeniable fact

of experience implies it. We cannot fulfil these conditions where the Absolute is concerned. Experience does not help us to conceive it, for all objects of experience are finite and all known values are relative, and between finite and infinite, relative and absolute, there is no true analogy. The Hellenic-Judaeo-Christian-Muslim conception of God has never been able to avoid running into antinomies, of which Dilthey mentions quite a number : antinomies between the changelessness of God and the possibility of human actions influencing Him ; between God's foreknowledge and human freedom ; between His omnipotence and human freedom ; between His absoluteness and the relativity of all possible conceptions of Him ; between His goodness and the fact of evil ; between the necessity of His knowledge and the freedom of His will ; between the arguments for the eternity of the world and those for its creation in time. The belief in God's existence has found its main support in the astronomical argument first formulated by Anaxagoras, and this was cogent in an age when the true principles of mechanics were unknown ; but modern astronomy has cut the ground from under it, and modern phenomenalism has undermined all attempts to base an argument on the facts of nature, whose real being is unknown to us. The other types of metaphysic fare no better than the traditional theism.

(b) The relation between mind and matter is not given in experience, and matter is not given at all except phenomenally. There are many functional correlations between mental and material processes, which can be investigated by experimental science ; but we can have no idea of the real nature of the process underlying these correlations, and without this we cannot build up a coherent metaphysic.

(c) A systematic metaphysic must harmonize the categories deriving from the three basic attitudes. But the attitudes themselves cannot be harmonized. One or another of them will prevail in any given person, and that one will colour his whole view of the world. Everything will be expressed in terms of it, the questions he asks and the conclusions he reaches, and the categories expressive of this predominant attitude will extrude or absorb the rest. By artificial contrivances a seeming harmony of the various categories can be brought about, but Dilthey remarks that the philosophies which do this always fail to become fruitful or

influential, however great the learning and ability bestowed on them by their authors. Influence remains with those philosophies which are frankly dominated by one point of view, though at the sacrifice of completeness.

(d) No metaphysic can be adequate if it does not do justice to what we know of the nature of mind. But it is characteristic of mind that it cannot be exhaustively described by any set of formulae. As Dilthey repeatedly says, "life cannot be brought before the bar of reason",<sup>1</sup> it is "inexhaustible" and "ineffable". It can be understood (*verstanden*) and progressively known (*erkannt*), but knowledge can never catch up with understanding, and no concept can be final. This means that philosophy can never carry out the whole of its programme. It may insist on logical clarity and precision at any price, borrow ideas and methods from mathematics and the exact sciences, and build up a system which ignores or distorts the facts of mental life; or it may gain comprehensiveness by including these facts, at the price of abandoning the claim to precision. It is not merely a question of finding a place for mind in a world which as a whole is amenable to clear-cut formulae. The basic categories of common sense are constituted by projecting lived experience into the physical world, and they carry imprecision with them. The *thing* is not merely a group of sensible qualities related according to a formula of succession and simultaneity, as idealism and phenomenalism would have it; we ascribe to it a unity of existence and activity which reflects the unity of our own mental life. *Power* and *cause* are similarly projections of the experience of activity and passivity. From common sense these categories pass over into metaphysics, which in all its history has never reached an agreed definition of *substance* and *causality*, nor ever can. And if we drop these categories, and become phenomenologists or positivists, we lose all grasp of the being of things, and so cannot have a metaphysic at all. To seek escape through idealism, making mind the only reality, is to transfer the imprecisions and ambiguities into the very core of our system.

2. The philosophy of nature can discover no absolute physical reality. All progress in this field of knowledge comes from positive science, which changes its teaching as evidence accumulates, but never gets beyond a system of endless relativities among

<sup>1</sup> G.S., VII, 261.

phenomena. Philosophy can do no more than study the logical principles which underpin these enquiries, as it also studies the value principles and the basic aims which underpin all systems of cultural and social life.

Even here we can find nothing which is in the strict sense of the word absolute and ultimate. Logic finds no ultimate truth from which all other truths derive. What it finds are the techniques of valid thinking. Equip a mind with a sensory organization and a discursive intelligence like ours, and place it in a world like ours, and it will have to think along certain lines if it hopes to reach truth. Likewise in ethics we do not find a single end under which all human purpose and conduct can be subsumed, or a single duty from which all duties flow. We do indeed find principles of a high degree of generality, some perhaps which are universally valid. But these represent the guiding principles of the technique of living, which results from placing a being such as man in a world such as ours. They cannot be defined with absolute precision, and the study of them can only be fruitful if it is based on a combination of historical and psychological knowledge. The same may be said of political theory, of aesthetics, of each of the departmental branches of philosophy. In each of them what finally confronts us is not an absolute principle, clearly definable and bearing its validity in itself, but the human situation as a whole, man placed in his world and finding the best ways to set about his various tasks, ways which naturally show certain permanent and universal features because the world is always the same world and man is always man, but which in detail are subject to the endless relativities of history. And if it is suggested that human nature is at least one absolute factor in the situation, Dilthey replies that nothing is permanent in human nature except the physical and mental structure of man and his basic instincts. All ideas and beliefs, tastes, habits, institutions, are historically conditioned and impermanent. It is his complaint against the natural law school of the Age of Reason that they did not recognize this, but appealed to human nature as if it had real permanent content.

For these reasons philosophy cannot do what it has traditionally set out to do, and there must therefore be a drastic revision of its aims and methods. Kant was right in proclaiming that it must cease to be dogmatic and become critical ; though Kant



himself retained a belief in absolute first principles and in philosophy as a demonstrative science of them, which we can no longer share. For his transcendental argumentation we must substitute a psychological and historical study of the conditions under which we think and act, and for his transcendental self we must substitute the totality of the empirical self. We shall then be able to say of philosophy as a whole what Dilthey once said of epistemology—that it is “psychology in motion, and in motion towards a definite end”.

That end is twofold. 1. In the first place it is to discover the structural conditions in the mind which make possible the various cultural and social activities, and to show how under the influence of social and historical conditions these activities assume continually changing forms. This is the business of logic and epistemology, ethics and political theory, aesthetics and the rest, which therefore stand in a double relation to the human studies. In one aspect they are dependent upon them all, especially upon structure-psychology, for it is here that the philosopher gets his weapons; but in another aspect they perform a function of the greatest importance not only for the human studies, but also for the natural sciences, by giving them a critical awareness and a sense of purpose and direction.

2. In place of metaphysics we must have a critical analysis of the conditions which give rise to the illusion that metaphysics is possible. These conditions lie in the metaphysical consciousness, the native drive of the mind towards unity of outlook. We have seen how this drive does result in the formation of *Weltanschauungen*, and how religion, art, and philosophy provide vehicles for the elaboration and expression of these. We can see too that they play an indispensable part in the life of man and society. The presence or absence of a *Weltanschauung* makes all the difference between a life that knows where it is going and a life that drifts. Philosophy cannot be less interested in these facts than in the cultural and social activities taken separately; and though we have now found that the traditional claim of philosophy to be able to define and demonstrate and elevate a *Weltanschauung* to the level of scientific knowledge is mistaken, it remains that philosophy must concern itself with them in some other way. Here too, here most of all, the solution is to drop dogmatism and become critical, which does not mean dismissing the *Weltanschauungen* out of hand

as tissues of illusion, but examining carefully what they really are and signify.

Every *Weltanschauung* is the result of reflection on experience. However dubious in detail a given *Weltanschauung* may be, and however the various *Weltanschauungen* may differ, still each of them is based on an experience which, while it may be partial and one-sided, is genuine as far as it goes. A summary of all existing *Weltanschauungen* would give, what is not otherwise obtainable, a complete account of what mankind has hitherto been able to make of experience. And here we see the philosopher's real task ; not to dismiss the various systems as so many illusions, but to disengage the central vision of each and bring them together, since it is not separately, but by complementing and correcting one another, that they tell their real tale. The means by which this is to be done is a study which Dilthey calls "philosophy of philosophy"—a comparative and critical *Weltanschauungslehre* which will analyse the metaphysical consciousness and the way in which *Weltanschauungen* arise out of it, classify them under their most frequent types, show how they find expression through religion, art, and philosophy, expose the hollowness of the metaphysical arguments in their support, and finally display their real significance as interpretations of experience.

Dilthey's own *Weltanschauungslehre* is based upon his doctrine of the structure of mental life. We saw how the three basic attitudes can never reach a perfect balance in any mind, but that one must prevail and colour the *Weltanschauung* accordingly. This gives rise to three main types of outlook, which Dilthey calls *naturalism*, *the idealism of freedom*, and *objective idealism*, and he works out their characteristics in detail as they appear in the spheres of religion, art, and philosophy.

*Naturalism* is that view of things which is based on the animal side of human nature, and on those aspects of the world which are akin to that side of man. In the field of religion it shows itself as a revolt against otherworldliness, and sometimes against religion itself on account of its inherent otherworldliness, and an assertion of the claims of the world and the flesh. In art it takes the form known as "realism", by which Dilthey means a preference for depicting the passional side of human nature and the play of capricious chance upon men's fortunes. In philo-

sophy it is associated with mathematics and natural science, its view of the physical universe being either dogmatically mechanist or materialist, or (more critically) phenomenalist or positivist. The appropriate theory of knowledge is sensationalist. With it goes an associationist psychology. In ethics it appears either as hedonism or as an ethic of power ; or else, with greater sophistication, it preaches liberation from the slavery of the passions, and from illusion and superstition, by means of scientific enlightenment. This is the philosophy of Democritus and Epicurus, of Protagoras, Hume, and Comte.

*The idealism of freedom* is based on the experience of free will and moral obligation. It takes personality as the highest value and the key to all reality, and usually tries to establish itself by means of a ruthless critique upon naturalism. In religion it appears as theism, especially Christian theism, whose doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* is aimed at the very heart of naturalism, which rests on the principle *ex nihilo nihil*. In art the corresponding phenomenon is the heroic view of life, the view which sees the highest value in character and in action as expressing character. It finds expression through dramatists such as Corneille or Schiller. The philosophic form of the same doctrine has most commonly been the conception of reason as a shaping power imposing order on a primal chaos or matter, as we find it in Anaxagoras, in Plato and Aristotle, and in mediaeval theism. The work of Kant and Fichte has led to a new version which substitutes the infinite moral will for the transcendent God of the earlier theories. Dilthey finds the same fundamental attitude also in Bergson and William James.

*Objective idealism* is based on the experience of the self as a whole, with due emphasis laid on the contemplative and affective sides of its life, and it reads into the universe a wholeness and a living unity like that of the self. Here we have not a formative power coming into things from beyond and above, but a divine life immanent in the world itself, enjoying itself in the eternal harmony of nature. The religious form of this Dilthey finds in India and China. The greatest exponent of it in art is Goethe. In philosophy it is associated with the idea of the world as a great organism, animated by a world soul, and from this flows the doctrine of a divine harmony in which every part of the whole reflects the rest, and is necessarily what it is because the harmony

of the whole requires it ; thus we reach a kind of determinism, but a determinism of value instead of mechanical force. The corresponding theory of knowledge is that which exalts intellectual intuition as the means whereby we see the unity of the Whole. This is the philosophy with which Dilthey himself had the greatest temperamental sympathy. Most of his romanticist teachers were inspired by it. He mentions, as representative names, the Stoics, Averroes, Bruno, Spinoza, Leibniz, Shaftesbury, Schelling, Hegel, Schleiermacher.

It should go without saying that these types are not always found unmixed, and Dilthey gives examples of one interesting blend. Thus it is evident that there was a side of Descartes which appreciated naturalism, while another side of him, the prevailing one, was attached to the idealism of freedom. That is why his philosophy breaks in two. Kant, on the other hand, who also had affinities both with naturalism and with the idealism of freedom, found a reconciliation by making naturalism only phenomenally true, and giving a primacy to practical reason. One might perhaps add the suggestion that Spinoza came to grief through attempting to combine naturalism with objective idealism, and that this is the root of the trouble about the two attributes of God in his philosophy ; while there are elements of the idealism of freedom to be discerned in various objective idealists such as Leibniz, Hegel, and Bradley.

In general the distinction drawn by Dilthey between the three types of doctrine seems to be sound and valuable. The discrimination between the two types of idealism is especially useful.

There are evident affinities between this philosophy and the apparently so different philosophy of Hegel ; especially in the recognition that doctrines are based on attitudes and theories on experience, and that behind the historical sequence of philosophic systems is to be seen the human mind itself, laboriously working out and criticizing the various possible interpretations of life and the world. Here Dilthey and Hegel are very close together, though Dilthey does not claim to be able to establish the truth of one form of doctrine to the detriment of the rest, as Hegel does. Both men understood that a fruitful study of philosophy to-day must spring from a knowledge of the history of philosophy, and indeed of the whole history of culture—a know-

ledge which both men possessed in a high degree. If to say that philosophy is history is wilful paradox, it is sober truth to say that philosophy is grounded in the human studies, and that the human studies are all potentially philosophic.

More interesting still is the comparison with R. G. Collingwood, which in some respects is very close. Both men were historians as well as philosophers; though Dilthey's historical researches were confined to the history of ideas, while Collingwood's covered the wider field of social and institutional history. Dilthey was more of a sociologist than Collingwood, though Collingwood's analysis of the social significance of magic and amusement in *The Principles of Art* is a piece of work which Dilthey would have liked to read. Both were interested in art, Collingwood more deeply and with better information. Both were interested in religion, though not as believers in any recognizable sense. Both deplored the neglect by philosophers of the logical and epistemological problems arising out of historical research. In discussions of lived experience and thought, of expression and understanding, they run close while remaining each himself. Both were concerned about the future of philosophy, and understood the challenge of the historical consciousness; Collingwood's doctrine of metaphysics as a history of absolute presuppositions is conceived in the same relativistic spirit as Dilthey's comparative *Weltanschauungslehre*. But Collingwood had violent objections to bringing philosophy and psychology too close together, whereas Dilthey welcomed their alliance and expected philosophy to become a kind of applied psychology. Dilthey also had a keener sense of the unity and interrelations of the various human studies, whereas Collingwood, like others in the idealist tradition, talks mainly about historiography. Collingwood writes the better literary style, his work is not too diffuse and each book is a finished unity, but it will probably be found that Dilthey has the broader horizon and the more sober judgment.

He has opened up new paths, which the philosophy of the future must explore. He himself has not trodden them to the end, and it will be appropriate to close by indicating certain points at which his work clearly calls for a step to be made beyond it.

His typology of *Weltanschauungen*, while illuminating and suggestive, can hardly be held to cover the whole ground of the

desired *Weltanschauungslehre*. Even as a typology we may ask whether it is complete; and we may also ask whether a typology is the only thing that we expect of a "philosophy of philosophy".

1. (a) His principle of classification and explanation is the structure of the individual mind. But that structure includes determinative factors other than those which he recognizes, and distinctions and antitheses to which he gives no place. Must not some account be taken of the four basic functions of thought, feeling, sensation, and intuition distinguished by Jung, and of the same writer's basic attitudes of introversion and extraversion? Jung has built up on these foundations a typology of character and outlook which is actually more detailed than Dilthey's, and some at least of his types are recognizable in religion, art, and philosophy. There are also the six types of character and outlook described by Spranger (see above, p. 49).

(b) Men's thoughts and actions are affected as much by the stimuli they receive as by their own psychological constitution, and of these stimuli none are more important than those which come from the social framework of their lives. This framework cannot be reduced to terms merely of the functional structure of the individual mind. It is a common idealist error to interpret it so, as e.g., Collingwood does in reducing the social and cultural facts of art, religion, and science to the psychological functions of imagination and thought. In reality all the functions of mental life are at work in all human activities, and the fact that one or another predominates in a given activity, and the manner in which its predominance is shown, must be explained by human needs and desires in conjunction with the physical and social environment. This is a question for sociology, not for individual psychology or "philosophy of the spirit". Dilthey, as we have seen, does not develop a systematic sociology, and this leaves a gap in his teaching. If he had had a sociology, it would surely have affected his typology of *Weltanschauungen*.

For instance, Dilthey lumps art and religion together as "cultural systems". But a case can be made for the view that art on the one hand, together with other cultural manifestations, and religion on the other hand, rest on different foundations, different mental attitudes and groups of purposes, the essence of culture lying in the exercise of human powers for the sheer joy

of mastery, of creation, contemplation, and discovery, while the essence of religion lies in the "metaphysical consciousness" as defined by Dilthey. Suppose this to be so. Then surely the different attitudes will view the world through different categories, and this will give rise to typical differences in outlook and belief, such as will come to light in philosophy. Such a view would in fact enable us to overcome one perplexity in Dilthey's own doctrine. Presumably the difference between theism and pantheism or immanentist idealism is of real importance and reveals a difference of mental attitude. But in Dilthey the Platonic and Judaeo-Christian theism and the idealism of Fichte come together as forms of the idealism of freedom. The difference between them cannot be due to purely intellectual conditions. It is not as if the intellectual climate of Hellenistic times had been such as to make an immanentist philosophy impossible; for there was Stoicism. The prevalence of theism in late antiquity and the Dark and Middle Ages and the emergence of immanentism in recent times could more plausibly be understood as the consequence of a change from a society in which religious interests prevailed over cultural interests to a society in which culture has eclipsed religion. Thus the recognition of sociological as distinct from psychological factors would lend to Dilthey's analysis a greater precision and adequacy.

2. Typology by itself, even if complete, would take us to a position in which we could not rest. It establishes and gives full documentation to the thesis of the relativity of all beliefs; and here it must be admitted that Dilthey has proved his point, and no more needs to be said. But to recognize this fact is only to be brought face to face with a further question—viz., what is the individual to do in this welter of relativities? It is a question which troubled Dilthey himself, as appears from a late writing in which he asks what driving force or inspiration his philosophy can offer, to compare with that which others derive from a positive religious faith. His answer is twofold. The knowledge of the relativity of all beliefs sets us free from illusion, and that in itself is a gain. But that is not all. Though no *Weltanschauung* is true in a sense which would make the others untrue, it does not follow that none of them are true in any degree at all. On the contrary, each one of them, while false as a theory, is true as a record of vision. It gives testimony of how the world can appear

to a certain type of mind in certain conditions, and how such minds in such conditions can confront their world. Knowing as we do that the truth of one does not involve the falsity of the rest, we are free to understand and use them all, and so obtain a fuller and richer and more balanced view of life and the world than could be got by accepting any one of them as it stands.

This really will not do. It is in conflict with Dilthey's own admissions. For he himself has seen the psychological necessity of a *Weltanschauung* to give unity and direction to a life, and it is obvious that a *Weltanschauung* can only do this if it is not merely toyed with, but definitely held. And that means that its rivals must be definitely not held, i.e., must be rejected. It is possible to play with rival points of view, manipulating them like a juggler, so long only as we have not to live and act in earnest, but in times of stress and danger or in moments of responsibility this is not possible. In such times, if not always, we see that points of view, *Weltanschauungen*, are not merely to be studied and enjoyed, but to be held and acted on, and for that purpose we want not many points of view, but one. If philosophy, or rather life itself, confronts us with many rival views of things, then we must take one and reject the rest. Dilthey's philosophy is open in its own way to the criticism which Kierkegaard brought against that of Hegel—viz., that it is full of syntheses where life is full of choices. It is always possible thus to synthesize ideas, or to hold diverse points of view together, so long as we are standing aloof, as spectators, and studying them. When it comes to holding them and acting on them, the oppositions reassert themselves, and we find that we cannot take sides with one without taking sides against another. To live is to act, and to act is to choose, and to choose is also to reject.

The present age has seen in many quarters a realization of this truth, and with it a growing dissatisfaction with the type of historicism or relativism which Dilthey represents. But there is a right and a wrong way to show this dissatisfaction. The wrong way is to turn one's back on all the arguments which have led up to Dilthey's position, to appeal against the verdict of history, to write off as misguided the most characteristic developments in philosophy since 1781, or 1619, or even 1274. The right course is to recognize that the way out is the way forward, that if we



wish to escape from Dilthey's position we must have the courage to pass through it.

What lies on the other side? A philosophy of self-examination and deliberate choice. Self-examination, to reveal to us the real springs of our thinking, which lie not in the thought-activity itself, but in deep-seated feelings and desires which determine the direction of our interests. And deliberate choice, to identify ourselves by our own responsible act with what we are already by nature. The precondition of sound work in philosophy is the ability and readiness to make a deep self-analysis, to discover what is one's fundamental attitude to life and the world, and what assumptions this attitude involves, and then (since it is impossible to escape from oneself and impossible even to desire it) to take these assumptions upon oneself with clear consciousness and full deliberation, and try to reduce all the detail of one's thinking to conformity with them. Everyone must necessarily be himself, though with elements of inconsistency, greater or less, due to his circumstances. The philosopher will be the man who *chooses* to be himself, and goes about it with all the consistency of which he is capable.

Philosophy so conceived is certainly a man's work, and of unquestionable value both to individuals and to society. It bears a certain resemblance to psychoanalysis, in that both try to go below the surface of people's beliefs and conduct, to drag into the daylight interests and assumptions which are usually hidden and which people would rather not be made to face. Philosophy, like psychoanalysis, punctures self-conceit and brings inner conflicts into view, and thus it is not surprising if, again like psychoanalysis, it is resisted and spoken against, most of all by those who need it most. On the other hand, there is one important difference. The psychoanalyst is skilled in breaking up morbid configurations of the soul, but his art does not, in itself, equip him to give help and guidance in the reconstruction which must follow. The philosopher's art is both critical and constructive, and those who would keep it purely critical are robbing it of half its virtue, are untrue to their responsibilities and are a danger to the public. They are actuated, in many cases, by a despair which is the natural result of the blows dealt by Locke, Hume, Kant, and their successors at the now ruined edifice of metaphysics as a demonstrative science, and they have not seen

the new vision (which is not new either, but as old as Socrates) of metaphysics as constructive psychotherapy, or rather nootherapy. It is to this that the road through Dilthey leads.

Philosophy on the Continent has already begun to follow this road. When Dilthey was ten years old the first word of challenge was uttered by the eccentric but far-sighted Kierkegaard. It was directed against Hegel, the romanticists, and liberal self-satisfaction, and in the prosperous nineteenth century it fell flat. Positivism and romanticism divided the inheritance of philosophy, and Dilthey, the disciple of both, drew both to the same conclusion in his own historicism. While he was engaged in doing this, another challenge was issued by Nietzsche. Dilthey and Nietzsche had in common a vigorous interest in cultural history, but neither shows any sign of being consciously influenced by the other. Their temperaments were different, and probably Nietzsche thought Dilthey was dull, while Dilthey thought Nietzsche was wild.<sup>1</sup> Nietzsche also fell flat in his life-time, and his isolation perhaps contributed to the overthrow of his reason. Meanwhile Dilthey, himself at first an isolated figure, began to gather friends around him, and his influence was growing when he died in 1911. The war of 1914-18 altered all this. The philosophy of crisis, the philosophy of existential choice, drawing its inspiration from Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, has taken possession of living writers, and Dilthey's teaching has proved grist to its mill. A philosophy which destroys the pretensions of speculative reason, and emphasizes the human, all-too-human character of our deepest convictions and our most revealing intuitions, is the proper foundation for a philosophy like Kierkegaard's, which summons us to refuse to drift with the current of events and to become ourselves by making a decisive choice—or like Nietzsche's, which tells us that value-standards are not found, but made, and that the task of our generation may be to unmake and remake them, once more by an act of creative choice.

The leading name in the existential movement is that of Karl Jaspers, who began as a psychologist, a disciple of Dilthey, and one of the founders of the school of understanding-psychology (see above, p. 49). His *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* (1919) already made the decisive step, for it combined a comparative study of the main types of outlook with a recognition of the fundamental

<sup>1</sup> See Dilthey's adverse verdict on Nietzsche, *G.S.*, VIII, 162-4.

importance of those crucial situations which compel far-reaching decisions. In his later writings he has developed further the meaning of existential choice, and of philosophy as existential thinking. His doctrine on this point is the legitimate heir of Dilthey's "philosophy of philosophy".

# SELECTED PASSAGES FROM WILHELM DILTHEY

CHOSEN AND TRANSLATED BY H. A. HODGES

## (1) *Aim of the "Introduction to the Human Studies"*

(Chapter I of the *Introduction to the Human Studies*. Dilthey's own title. *G.S.*, I, 3-4)

Ever since the celebrated work of Bacon, treatises have been drawn up, especially by natural scientists, discussing the foundation and method of the natural sciences and so leading up to the study of them. The best known among them is that by Sir John Herschel. There seems to be a need for the same service to be performed on behalf of those who are concerned with history, political theory, jurisprudence or political economy, theology, literature, or art. Those who devote themselves to the above-named studies are apt to approach them from the standpoint of the practical needs of society, for the purposes of a professional education which equips the leading members of society with the knowledge requisite for the fulfilment of their tasks. Yet this professional education will fit the individual for the higher functions only in proportion as it goes beyond the limits of a technical training. Society may be likened to a great machine which is kept going by the services of innumerable persons: the man who works in it with no equipment beyond the technique of his peculiar profession, however fully he may have this technique at his command, is in the position of a worker busied all his life at one particular point in this machine, without knowing the forces which set it in motion, or even having any idea of the other parts of the machine and what they contribute to the purpose of the whole. He is a cog in society, not a consciously self-adjusting organ in it. It is the purpose of this book to assist the politician or the jurist, the theologian or the educationalist, in acquiring a knowledge of the relation between the principles and rules by which he is guided and the surrounding reality of human society, to which in the long run, at the point where he makes his contribution, his life's work is dedicated.

It lies in the very nature of this problem that it cannot be

solved without an insight into those truths upon which our knowledge, both of nature and of the historical and social world, must be based. Seen from this standpoint, our problem, which arises from the demands of practical life, comes into touch with a problem set by the conditions of pure theory.

The studies which have historical and social reality for their object are enquiring more urgently than ever before into their connections with one another and their foundations. Causes inherent in the condition of the several positive studies are working in this direction along with the more powerful impulses which arise from the instability of society since the French Revolution. Knowledge of the forces which prevail in society, of the causes which have brought about its instability, and of the resources available in it for progress on sound lines, has become a vital question for our civilization. Therefore the importance of the social sciences in comparison with the sciences of nature is growing; on the huge scale of our modern life there is taking place a shift of intellectual interest similar to that in the small Greek communities in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., when the transformations within this family of States gave rise to the negative natural law theories of the Sophists, and also, in contrast with them, to the works of the Socratic schools on the State.

## (2) *The Historical Background of Dilthey's Work*

(From the Preface to the *Introduction to the Human Studies*. G.S., I, xv-xviii)

At the close of the Middle Age the emancipation of the special sciences began. Yet some of them, the sciences of society and history, remained for a long time, far into the last century, in the old slavery to metaphysics. Worse still, the growing power of the natural sciences involved for them a new relationship of subjection which was not less oppressive than the old. It was the historical school—taking the phrase in a comprehensive sense—which completed the emancipation of the historical consciousness and of historical science. At the very time when, in France, the system of social ideas comprising natural law, natural religion, abstract political theory, and abstract political economy, which had been developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was drawing its practical conclusions in the Revolution,

and while the armies of this Revolution were besetting and disintegrating the German Empire with its old, curiously ramshackle structure ravaged by the breath of a thousand years of history, there had taken shape in our country a vision of historical growth as the process in which all facts belonging to the mind take their rise, and this vision had revealed the falsity of that entire system of social ideas. It extended from Winckelmann and Herder through the romantic school to Niebuhr, Jakob Grimm, Savigny and Böckh. It was strengthened by the reaction against the Revolution. It spread in England through Burke, in France through Guizot and de Tocqueville. In the conflicts of European society, whether concerning law, politics, or religion, it made hostile contact everywhere with the ideas of the eighteenth century. In this school there lived a clear empirical eye for facts, a loving penetration into the detail of the historical process, a universal outlook upon history, seeking to determine the value of the particular fact only in terms of the part it plays in development, and a historical spirit in sociology, seeking explanation and guidance for the life of the present day in the study of the past, and in the last resort regarding the life of mind as in every respect a historical product. From this school a stream of new ideas flowed through innumerable channels to all the special sciences.

But hitherto the historical school has not broken through the inner limitations which were bound to hinder its theoretical development and its influence on life. Its study and evaluation of historical phenomena was not brought into relation with the analysis of the facts of consciousness, and so was not based upon what is in the last resort the only secure knowledge ; in short, it had no philosophical foundation. It had no healthy relationship with epistemology and psychology. For that reason it also failed to develop an explanatory method : and yet historical contemplation and comparative methods by themselves can neither erect an independent system of the human studies nor obtain influence upon life. So it was that, when Comte, J. S. Mill, and Buckle renewed the attempt to solve the riddle of the historical world by a transference of principles and methods from natural science, the deeper and more vital outlook, which had neither firm foundations nor the power to explicate itself, could make only an ineffective protest against the inferior and more poverty-stricken outlook, which had command of analysis. The

opposition of Carlyle and other lively minds to exact science was a symptom of this state of things, both in the strength of their hate and in their stammering tongues and speech. And amid such uncertainty about the foundations of the human studies, some scholars retreated into mere description, some found satisfaction in views which were ingenious but subjective, others again threw themselves back into the arms of a metaphysic which promises to provide the trustful with principles that have the power to transform practical life.

It was my appreciation of this state of affairs in the human studies which led me to attempt to give a philosophical grounding to the principles of the historical school and the work of the special sciences of society, now determined through and through by it, and so to resolve the conflict between this historical school and the abstract theories. I was troubled at my work by questions which every reflective historian, jurist, or political theorist has at heart. Thus the need and the plan for an examination of the foundations of the human studies arose spontaneously in my mind. What is the system of principles which underlies alike the historian's judgment, the economist's conclusions, and the jurist's conceptions, and makes it possible to determine their weight? Do its roots reach back into metaphysics? Is there perhaps a philosophy of history or a natural law based on metaphysical conceptions? Or, if that can be dismissed, where can we find a firm support for a system of principles giving connection and certainty to the special studies?

The answers given to these questions by Comte and the positivists, J. S. Mill and the empiricists, seemed to me to mutilate historical reality in order to adapt it to the ideas and methods of the natural sciences. The reaction against this, brilliantly represented by Lotze's *Mikrokosmos*, seemed to me to sacrifice the justified independence of the special sciences, the fruitful power of their empirical methods, and the security of their foundations, in the interests of a sentimental frame of mind, a wistful longing to recall the vanished days when knowledge was a way to the satisfaction of the heart. Nowhere but in inner experience, in the facts of consciousness, did I find a firm anchorage for my thought, and I venture to believe that no reader will be able to escape the force of my argument on this point. All knowledge is knowledge of experience; but the original unity of all experi-

ence and its resulting validity are conditioned by the factors which mould the consciousness within which it arises, i.e., by the whole of our nature. This standpoint, which consistently realizes the impossibility of going behind these conditions, of seeing as it were without an eye or directing the gaze of knowledge behind the eye itself, I call the epistemological standpoint ; modern knowledge can recognize no other. But then it further became apparent to me that from this standpoint the independence of the human studies finds a foundation such as the historical school required. For from this standpoint our view of the whole natural world turns out to be a mere shadow cast by a reality hidden from us, while it is only in the facts of consciousness given in inner experience that we possess reality as it is. The analysis of these facts lies at the centre of the human studies, and so, in accord with the standpoint of the historical school, in knowing the principles which govern the world of mind we remain within that world, and the human studies form an independent system by themselves.

If I often found myself in agreement on such points with the epistemological school of Locke, Hume, and Kant, recognizing with them in the facts of consciousness the whole foundation of philosophy, yet I was forced to differ from this school in my conception of the connected pattern of these facts. Apart from a few projects which were not systematically worked out, like those of Herder and Wilhelm von Humboldt, epistemology down to the present day, whether empiricist or Kantian, explains experience and knowledge in terms of elements belonging merely to the sphere of ideas. In the veins of the knowing subject constructed by Locke, Hume, and Kant runs no real blood, but the diluted fluid of reason in the sense of mere thought-activity. But I was led, by my concern as historian and psychologist with the whole man, to make this whole man, in the full diversity of his powers, this willing, feeling, thinking being, the foundation for explaining even knowledge and its concepts (such as those of the external world, time, substance, cause), however much it may seem that knowledge weaves these its concepts only from the material of perception, imagination, and thought. The method of the following exposition is therefore as follows : I bring every element in our present-day abstract scientific thinking into relation with the whole nature of man as revealed by



experience, by linguistic and historical study, and I look for the connections between the one and the other. The result is to show that the most important elements in the way we picture and know reality, such as personal identity, the external world, individuals outside ourselves, their life in time and their interactions—all these can be explained in terms of this whole nature of man, in which volition, feeling, and cognition are only different sides of a single real life-process. It is not by the assumption of rigid *a priori* principles belonging to our cognitive faculty, but only by starting with the totality of our being and tracing the course of its development, that we can answer the questions which we all have to address to philosophy.

### (3) *The Task of a Critique of Historical Reason*

(From a fragment published posthumously. *G.S.*, VII, 191-2)

It will deduce the real principle of knowledge in the human studies step by step from experience. Understanding is a rediscovery of the I in the Thou; mind rediscovers itself on higher and higher levels of systematic connection; this identity of mind in the I, in the Thou, in every subject within a community, in every system of culture, and finally in the totality of mind and of world history, makes possible the joint result of the various operations performed in the human studies. The knowing subject is here one with its object, and this object is the same on all levels of objectification. If by this procedure we come to recognize the objectivity of the world of mind built up in the subject's consciousness, we must then go on to ask how much this can contribute to the solution of the problem of knowledge in general. Kant started from the foundations offered by formal logic and mathematics for the treatment of the problem of knowledge. Formal logic in Kant's time saw in the ultimate logical abstractions, the laws and forms of thought, the ultimate logical ground for the validity of all scientific principles. The laws and forms of thought, especially the judgment, in which he found the categories given, contained for him the conditions of knowledge. He amplified these conditions by adding those which according to him make mathematics possible. The greatness of his achievement lay in a complete analysis of mathe-

matical and natural-scientific knowledge. But the question is, whether an epistemology of history, which he himself has not furnished, is possible within the framework of his ideas.

#### (4) *The Practical Problem*

(From Dilthey's inaugural lecture at Basel in 1867, entitled *The Poetic and Philosophical Movement in Germany, 1770-1800*. G.S., V, 27)

Philosophy is related by regular laws to the sciences, to art and to society. From this relationship its tasks arise. Ours is clearly marked out for us : to follow Kant's critical path to the end, and establish an empirical science of the human mind in collaboration with workers in other fields ; our task is to get to know the laws which govern social, intellectual, and moral phenomena. This knowledge of laws is the source of all man's power in dealing with mental phenomena as well as with others. Man's aim is to act ; but philosophy will be able to guarantee truly fruitful preconditions for action in the various great departments of practical life, in society, moral intercourse, education, and law, only *in so far as* it discloses the *inner nature* of man, in so far as it teaches us not to thrust a rashly experimental hand suddenly into the inner development of man, which ought to be sacred to us, but to be active in the moral world in accordance with clear knowledge of its great system of laws.

#### (5) *Psychic Structure*

(From a posthumously published essay, *The Logical System in the Human Studies*. G.S., VII, 324-5)

The stream of psychical life consists of processes. Each of them has a beginning in time and changes in time ; and even if I make a cross-section somewhere in the sequence of the life-process and so appear to reach a state, the mere fixing of a determinate state of consciousness by attention, which thus takes place, evokes the appearance of duration. Who does not know the irregularity and apparent contingency in this stream of psychic life ? Thus a harmonious combination of sounds calls up a feeling of contentment ; then into this quiet aesthetic enjoyment intrudes a visual perception, it reproduces memories, so

arises a desire, and this again, on the basis of a judgment, is suppressed by fear of the consequences of satisfying it, and so goes on the restless succession in which processes of the most various kinds appear in turn—driven on from within, conditioned from without.

In this varied succession I look for uniformities, and I find two kinds of them. If I single out from the nexus of processes certain particular ones such as association, combination, reproduction, apperception, I can establish uniformities in them inductively. Thus rules of dependence can be established, according to which the reproduction of our ideas is determined by the interest and attention with which impressions have been received and ideas of them reproduced, by the combination of these ideas and by the number of their repetitions. Such uniformities answer to the laws of change in external nature. And they make it possible by means of hypotheses to explain the psychic process.

From the inferred regularities of such an explanatory psychology I distinguish those which I call the structure of the mental system. This system contains in itself a fixed pattern of relations between its elements. It is to be likened to the anatomical structure of a body. It consists in a regular arrangement of the component parts of the psychical system. The relations in this system are those of parts in and to a whole. And they are capable of being consciously lived, in a sense which I shall later define more precisely. Such structural relations subsist between lived experiences far removed from one another. Thus the resolve in which I set before myself a plan of life can be structurally bound up with a long series of actions which appear in many years and at wide intervals from itself. This peculiarity of structure is of the highest importance. As life flows on in temporal processes, each of which falls away into the past, shaping and development are possible in it only because the corruptibility of every process is overcome by a systematic connection which puts events separated from one another in time into an inner relation, and so makes it possible for the past to be preserved and the transient to be crystallized by a process into more and more permanent forms. The whole life-process is a structural system of lived experiences, indifferently far apart in time, articulated from within and bound together into a unity.

(6) *Lived Experience, Expression, and Understanding*

(From the same essay. G.S., VII, 328-9)

The various types of relation [sc. the cognitive, affective, and conative "attitudes" of mind] stand to one another in a relation of cause and effect; one of them evokes another. Images presented by the senses, or thoughts about them, give rise to feelings of satisfaction, of expansion of our personality and fulfilment of our being, and these in turn produce the effort and the resolve to maintain this state of things. This causal process, which leads from objective apprehension to feeling and from that to will and action, falls within inner experience, and thus arises our knowledge of the structural system. The causation itself is consciously lived; if it were not consciously lived, then it would not find so direct and powerful expression in poetry and history. It is not that a regular sequence of particular states is given and their causal connection inferred, but the power of causation, the irresistibility with which an apprehended object sets all our feelings in tempestuous motion, the irresistibility with which a man, in despite of all reason, is as it were enchanted and constrained to snatch to himself the object of these feelings, the depths of human nature which reveal themselves in this constraint and enchantment and enslavement—these are the object of the religious teachings of Buddha, Paul, Augustine, and likewise of the poems of the great tragedians, regardless of their divergences in outlook. Only from the depths of lived experience can the strong expressions for these things be drawn—it is not from inferences that our knowledge of causation, which makes the true system of life accessible to us, has arisen. Thus we have a fragmentary experience of certain connections, which are then combined into the structural system in memory and in reflection upon it. In a single sweep of memory we run through the connected sequence of our earlier life. Or again, how clearly we discern in a lyrical poem the movement from an imagined situation to a sequence of feelings, which in turn often evokes an effort or an action. Or in the dynamic pattern based on the typical arrangement of a speech, where an initial exposition of the facts of the case calls up in us a world of feelings, from which we are again led on to a practical attitude. More and more, in these ways, the meaning of the relations between lived experience,

expression, and understanding reveals itself. What arises unreflectingly in lived experience is, in the expression, as it were dragged forth from the depths of mental life. For the expression wells up out of the soul immediately, without reflection, and then by virtue of its fixity it remains to be understood ; thus it includes more of lived experience than introspection can discover.

### (7) *Objective Mind and Elementary Understanding*

(From *The Understanding of Other Persons and their Expressions*, an essay written for inclusion in the *Critique of Historical Reason* and published posthumously. *G.S.*, VII, 208-10)

I have shown what objective mind means for the possibility of knowledge in the human studies. I understand by it the manifold forms in which the common background subsisting among various individuals has objectified itself in the sensible world. In this objective mind the past is for us a permanent enduring present. Its realm extends from the style of life and the forms of economic intercourse to the whole system of ends which society has formed for itself, to morality, law, the State, religion, art, science and philosophy. For the work of genius too represents a common stock of ideas, mental life, and ideals at a particular time and in a particular environment. From earliest childhood our self receives its nourishment from this world of objective mind. It is also the medium in which the understanding of other persons and their expressions takes place. For everything in which the mind has objectified itself contains in itself a factor common to the I and the Thou. Every square planted with trees, every room in which chairs are arranged, is intelligible to us from our infancy, because every square and every object in the room has had its place assigned to it by the common human activities of planning, arranging, and value-determining. The child grows up among the regular life and habits of a family, which it shares with other members, and the mother's injunctions are accepted by it in this context. Before it learns to speak, it is already deeply immersed in the medium of a common background. And it learns to understand gestures and looks, movements and exclamations, words and sentences, only because they confront it always in the same form and in the same relation to that which they

mean and express. Thus the individual gets his bearings in the world of objective mind.

Hence follows a conclusion which is of importance for the process of understanding. The expression of life which the individual apprehends is to him as a rule not simply this particular expression, but is as it were filled with a knowledge of a common background and with a relation to an inner reality given in this common background.

This insertion of the particular expression into a common background is facilitated by the fact that objective mind contains in itself an ordered arrangement. It embraces particular homogeneous systems such as law or religion, and these have a stable and regular structure. Thus in civil law the imperatives enunciated in the clauses of a statute, which are meant to secure the highest possible degree of perfection in the realization of a living relationship, are associated with an order of procedure, with courts and with machinery for the execution of their decisions. Within such a system there subsists a multitude of typical differences. Thus the particular expressions with which the understanding subject is faced can be apprehended as belonging to a common sphere and to a type. And so, by virtue of the relation between the expression and the mental reality which prevails within this common sphere, the insertion of the expression into a common sphere carries with it the amplification of it by the relevant mental reality. A sentence is intelligible through the common background which subsists within a speech-community in respect of the meanings of words, the forms of inflection, and the significance of syntactical arrangement. The order of behaviour established in a particular cultural circle makes it possible for words of greeting or gestures of respect to betoken by their nuances a particular mental attitude to other persons and to be understood as doing so. Manual labour has developed in different countries a particular mode of procedure and particular instruments for the fulfilment of a purpose, and from these we can understand the purpose if the worker uses a hammer or a saw. In all these cases the relation between the expression and the mental reality is established by insertion into a common sphere. And this explains why it is present and operative in our apprehension of particular expressions, and why, without conscious inference on the basis of the relation between expression

and expressed, both factors in the process are in understanding fused together into a complete unity.

(8) *The Higher Forms of Understanding*

(From the same essay. *G.S.*, VII, 212-13)

Understanding has always something individual for its object. And in its higher forms it argues from the inductive colligation of the sets of facts given in a work or a life to the systematic connection in a work or a person, a vital relationship. But we found in our analysis of lived experience and the understanding of ourselves that the individual in the world of mind is an intrinsic value, indeed the only intrinsic value that we can establish beyond doubt. Hence he concerns us not only as a case of human nature in general, but as an individual whole. Our concern with him in this aspect occupies a considerable space in our lives, in forms that are noble or mean, vulgar or foolish, quite apart from the practical interest which constantly compels us to reckon with other men. The secret of the person invites us of its own accord to ever new and deeper attempts to understand. And in such understanding there is opened up the realm of individuals which embraces human beings and their creations. Herein lies the most characteristic service rendered by understanding to the human studies. Objective mind and the power of the individual together determine the world of mind. History rests on the understanding of both.

But we understand individuals by virtue of their affinities with one another, the common factors which they share. This process presupposes the relation between human nature in general and individuality, which, on the basis of the general, branches out into the multiplicity of mental existences. The problem which we continually solve in practice when we understand is that of inwardly living through, as it were, this movement towards individuality. The material for the solution of this problem comprises the particular data as induction brings them together. Each is something individual and is grasped as such. It therefore contains an element which makes it possible to seize the determinate individuality of the whole. But the presupposition of this procedure takes on more and more developed forms through penetration into the particular and

comparison of this particular with others, and so the business of understanding leads us further and further into the depths of the world of mind. As objective mind contains in itself an ordered system articulated according to types, so also mankind contains a species of ordered system leading from the regularity and structure of human nature in general to the types through which understanding grasps individuals. If we start by recognizing that individuals are not distinguished by qualitative differences, but by a kind of stress laid upon particular elements, however we may express this in psychological language, then it is in this stress that the inner principle of individuality lies. And if it were possible that in the act of understanding we should be able to set in motion at one and the same time the external principle of individuation, viz., the alteration of mental life and its situation by circumstances, and the internal principle, viz., variation through laying stress upon the different elements in the mind's structure—then the understanding of human beings and of poetic and literary works would be a way of access to the greatest mystery of life. And that is in fact the case. To see how it happens we must turn our attention to that factor in understanding to which no description in logical formulae—and it is only such a schematic and symbolic description that can be in question here—can do justice.

(9) *Projecting, Reproducing, Reliving*

(From the same essay. *G.S.*, VII, 213-16)

The position which the higher type of understanding takes up in face of its object is determined by its task, which is to discover a living unity in the given. This is only possible if the systematic unity which subsists in the subject's own lived experience, and is experienced in innumerable instances, is always present and available with all its inherent possibilities. This state of things, which is involved in the task of understanding, we call a projection of the self into a person or a work. Then every line of the poem is changed back into life by the inner system in lived experience, from which the poem takes its origin. Possibilities inherent in the soul are evoked by the external words brought to apprehension by the elementary operations of the intellect. The soul treads the wonted paths on which of old, in



response to kindred life-situations, it enjoyed and suffered, desired and acted. Numberless ways are open in the past and in dreams of the future ; from the words which we read radiate numberless lines of thought. When the poem indicates the external situation, this already has a favourable effect in helping the poet's words to evoke the atmosphere appropriate to them. Here too we meet the relation already mentioned, whereby expressions of lived experience contain more than lies in the poet's or artist's consciousness, and therefore also call up more. This active presence of the mental system privately enjoyed, which follows from the very terms in which the problem of understanding is set, is also called the *transference* of the subject's own self into a given complex of expressions.

On the basis of this projection, this transposition, arises the highest form in which the totality of mental life can operate in understanding—that of reproducing or reliving (*das Nachbilden oder Nacherleben*). In the operation of understanding as such the direction of the life-process itself is reversed. But a perfect sharing of life is only possible if our understanding moves forward along the actual line of events. Constantly striding forward, it advances with the life-process itself. In this way the process of self-projection or transposition widens out. Reliving means creating along the line of events. Thus we go forward with history, with an event in a far land or with something that is going on in the soul of a human being close to us. It reaches its fulfilment where the event has passed through the consciousness of the poet, the artist, or the historian, and now lies before us fixed and enduring in his work.

Thus a lyrical poem enables us by the sequence of its lines to relive a connected mass of lived experience : not the actual experience which stimulated the poet, but that which, on the basis of it, the poet puts into the mouth of an ideal person. The sequence of scenes in a play enables us to relive segments of the lives of the persons represented. The narrative of the novelist or the historian, which follows the historical process, produces in us a reliving of that process. It is the triumph of reliving that, in it, the fragments of a process are so filled out that we think we have a continuous whole before us.

But wherein does this reliving consist ? The process interests us here only from the point of view of its function ; we do not

propose to give a psychological explanation of it. Thus we shall not go into the relation between this conception and that of sympathy or that of empathy, although the connection between them is evident from the fact that sympathy heightens the energy with which we relive. Let us turn our attention to the significant function of this reliving as a contribution to the process of making the world of mind our own. It rests on two elements. Every vivid imaginative presentment of a milieu and an outward situation stimulates a reliving process in us. And fancy can strengthen or weaken the emphasis upon the attitudes, forces, feelings, strivings, lines of thought which are contained in our own lives, and in this way can reproduce any other person's mental life. The curtain rises. Richard appears, and a lively mind, following his words, mien, and movements, can relive something which lies outside any possibility of his real actual life. The fantastic forest in *As You Like It* puts us in a mood to reproduce any eccentricity.

And in this reliving lies an important part of the gain of mental treasure which we owe to the historian and the poet. The life-process brings about in every man a continual determination by which the possibilities inherent in him come to be limited. The crystallization of his nature constantly determines his further development. In short, whether he contemplates the fixity of his circumstances or the form of his acquired experience, he always finds that the circle of new perspectives upon life and inner changes of his personal character is a limited one. But understanding opens to him a wide realm of possibilities which are not to hand in the determination of his actual life. For me, as for most people to-day, the possibility of living through religious experiences in my own person is narrowly circumscribed. But when I run through Luther's letters and writings, the accounts given by his contemporaries, the records of the religious conferences and councils and of his official activities, I live through a religious process of such eruptive power, of such energy, in which the stake is life or death, that it lies beyond any possibility of personal experience for a man of our day. But I can relive it. I project myself into the circumstances: everything in them strains towards such an extraordinary development of the life of the religious mind. I see in the monasteries a technique of intercourse with the invisible world, giving to monkish souls an

eye constantly directed towards the things of another world. Here theological controversies become questions of inner experience. I see how that which thus takes shape in the monasteries spreads through innumerable channels—pulpits, confessionals, professorial chairs, writings—into the lay world; and then I observe how councils and religious movements have spread everywhere the doctrine of the invisible Church and universal priesthood, and how it enters into relation with the liberation of personality in secular life; how in this way what had been achieved in the solitude of the cell, in struggles of such violence as has been described, maintains itself in face of the Church. Christianity as a power to shape life even in the family, in men's vocations, in political relationships—that is a new force confronting the spirit of the time in the towns and everywhere where higher work is done, in Hans Sachs, in Dürer. When Luther goes his way at the head of this movement, we live through his development on the basis of a relationship which extends from human nature in general to the religious sphere, and from that through its historical determinations to his individuality. And so this process opens up to us a religious world in him and his contemporaries of the early Reformation, which widens our horizon to include possibilities of human life which are accessible to us only in this way. Thus man, determined from within, can live in imagination through many other existences. Before man limited by circumstances there open out strange beauties in the world, and tracts of life which he can never reach. To generalize—man, bound and determined by the reality of life, is set free not only by art—as has often been shown—but also through the understanding of history. And this effect of history, which its most recent detractors have not seen, is broadened and deepened on the wider levels of the historical consciousness.

(10) *Hermeneutics*

(Introduction to *The Rise of Hermeneutics*. G.S., V, 317-20)

In an earlier essay I have discussed the portrayal of individuality in the world of men as it is carried out by artistic and especially by poetic creation. Now we are faced by the question of *scientific* knowledge of individual persons, and of the great

forms of individual human existence in general. Is such knowledge possible? And what means have we of attaining it?

It is a question of the greatest importance. Our actions everywhere presuppose the understanding of other persons; a great part of human happiness springs from the sharing of other people's mental states; the whole of philological and historical knowledge is based on the presupposition that this understanding of the singular can be raised to the level of objectivity. The historical consciousness, built on this, enables modern man to have present in himself the entire past of humanity: beyond all the limits of his own time he looks out upon vanished cultures; he takes up their power into himself and enjoys their charm: a great increase of happiness comes to him from this. And if from this objective apprehension of the singular the systematic human studies deduce universal relationships of law and comprehensive systems, yet the processes of understanding and exposition remain fundamental for them also. Hence these studies no less than history depend for their security upon the question whether the understanding of the singular can be raised to the level of *universal validity*. In this way, at the very gate of the human studies, we are met by a problem which is peculiar to them in contrast with all knowledge of nature.

True, the human studies have an advantage over all knowledge of nature in that their object is not a phenomenon given in sensation, a mere reflection in consciousness of something real, but immediate inner reality itself, and this moreover in the form of a connected system enjoyed from within. Yet the very manner in which this reality is given in *inner experience* gives rise to great difficulties in apprehending it objectively. This is not the place to go into them. Further, the inner experience in which I become aware of my own states can never by itself make me conscious of my own individuality. It is only in comparing myself with others that I come to experience what is individual in myself; only then do I become conscious of that in my own existence which differs from others, and Goethe is only too right in saying that this, the most important of all our experiences, is very difficult for us, and our insight into the extent, the nature, and the limits of our powers always remains very imperfect. But the existence of others is in the first instance given to us only from without, in facts of sensation, in gestures, sounds, and

actions. It is only by a process of reconstructing that which thus falls under the observation of our senses in particular signs that we add this inner reality. Everything—the content, the structure, the most individual traits of this interpretative addition—has to be transferred from our own life. Now, how can a consciousness with an individual cast of its own attain to objective knowledge of another and a quite differently constituted individuality by means of this kind of reconstruction? What kind of a process is this, which shows such a seemingly alien face among the other processes of knowledge?

We call the process in which, from signs given outwardly to the senses, we know an inner reality, by the name of *understanding*. That is the common usage; and a fixed psychological terminology, such as we so sadly need, can only come about if every expression already firmly coined, and clearly enough defined to be usable, is kept to by all writers in concert. Understanding of nature—*interpretatio naturae*—is a figurative expression. But even the apprehension of our own states is spoken of as understanding only in an improper sense. True, we say “I do not understand how I could have acted so”, or even “I can no longer understand myself”. But by this I mean to say that a manifestation of my nature which has appeared in the sensible world confronts me like that of a stranger, and that as such I am unable to interpret it, or, in the other case, that I have got into a state which I stare at as if it were someone else’s. We mean, then, by understanding, the process in which from signs given to the senses we come to know a psychic reality whose manifestation they are.

This understanding extends from the apprehension of a child’s babble to that of *Hamlet* or the *Critique of Pure Reason*. From stones, marble, musically formed sounds, from gestures, words and writing, from actions, economic institutions and constitutions, the same human mind speaks to us and calls for exegesis. And the process of understanding, so far as it is determined by the common conditions and media of this mode of knowledge, must everywhere have common marks. In these fundamental points it is the same. If I set out to understand, e.g., Leonardo, the interpretation of actions, paintings, pictures and writings works together in a homogeneous unitary process.

Understanding shows various grades. These are conditioned

in the first instance by interest. If the interest is limited, so is the understanding. How impatiently we listen to many an explanation ! We hold on to one point in it, which is of practical importance to us, without having any interest in the inner life of the speaker. Whereas in other cases we strive keenly to press through every facial expression and every word into the inner mind of a speaker. But even the keenest attention cannot become a skilled process, in which a controllable degree of objectivity is reached, unless the manifestation of life is fixed so that we can return to it again and again. Such *skilled understanding of permanently fixed manifestations of life we call exegesis or interpretation*. In this sense there is also an art of exegesis whose objects are statues or paintings, and as long ago as Friedrich August Wolf an archaeological hermeneutic and criticism was demanded. Welcker came forward in its support, and Preller tried to work it out. But even Preller emphasizes that such interpretation of dumb works must have recourse everywhere to explanation from literature.

The immeasurable importance of literature for our understanding of mental life and history lies here, in the fact that only in speech does the inner life of man find its complete, exhaustive, and objectively intelligible expression. Therefore the art of understanding has its centre in the exegesis or *interpretation of the remains of human existence which are contained in writing*.

The exegesis of these remains, and the critical handling of them which is inseparably bound up with it, was accordingly the starting-point of *philology*. The kernel of philology is a *personal art and mastery in such handling of what is contained in writing*, and only in combination with this art and its results can any other interpretation of monuments or actions reported by historical tradition be successful. About the motives of the persons acting in history we may be mistaken, the agents themselves may cast a deceptive light upon them. But the work of a great poet or discoverer, a religious genius or a genuine philosopher, can never be anything but the true expression of his mental life ; in this falsehood-ridden human society such a work is always true, and unlike all other expressions in fixed signs it is capable in itself of a complete and objective interpretation ; it even casts its light upon the other artistic monuments of an age and upon the historical actions of its contemporaries.

This art of interpretation has developed just as gradually,

regularly, and slowly as, e.g., the art of questioning nature by experiment. It arose and maintains itself in the personal mastery of the able philologist. Hence too it is naturally handed on to others predominantly through personal contact with the great master of exegesis or with his work. But at the same time every art proceeds according to *rules*. These teach us how to overcome difficulties. They hand on the gains acquired by personal skill. Hence out of the art of exegesis there early took shape the *exposition* of its *rules*. And out of the conflict between these rules, out of the struggle between various tendencies over the exegesis of vitally important works and the consequent need to find a basis for the rules, arose the science of hermeneutics. It is the *technique* of the *exegesis* of *written records*.

In analysing understanding in order to determine the possibility of universally valid exegesis, hermeneutics ultimately pushes ahead towards the solution of the *quite general problem* with which this discussion began; the analysis of understanding takes its place beside that of inner experience, and both together indicate to the human studies the *possibility* and the *limitations* of universally valid knowledge in them, in so far as these are conditioned by the way in which psychical facts are originally given to us.

I intend to make this regular and necessary development visible in the history of hermeneutics. I shall show how the need for deep and universally valid understanding gave rise to philological mastery, and this in turn to the laying down of rules and the codification of them with a view to a purpose which was more precisely determined by the state of human knowledge at a given period, until finally the safe starting-point from which to lay down rules was discovered in the analysis of understanding.

### (11) *The Intuitive Element in Understanding*

(From *On Comparative Psychology*. G.S., V, 278)

By virtue of these relationships *scientific exegesis or interpretation*, i.e., understanding by *skilled reproduction*, has always an element of genius, i.e., it reaches a high degree of perfection only through inner affinity and sympathy. Thus the works of the ancients began to be fully understood again in the Renaissance period, when similar conditions had for their consequence an affinity between the men of the two ages. This inner relationship,

which makes transposition possible, is therefore the presupposition of all hermeneutic rules, and it is only by a methodical procedure resting on this living relationship that they can deduce their particular results in dealing with various objects. It is the same living relationship too, in the first instance, which enables us to amplify tradition and exclude what is not authentic, whatever rational factors may also contribute. There is no scientific process which could leave this living reproduction behind as a subordinate element. Here is the mother earth from which even the most abstract operations in the human studies must continually draw their strength. Understanding here can never be transmuted into rational comprehension. It is vain to wish to make the hero or the genius comprehensible in terms of miscellaneous circumstances. The most proper approach to him is the most subjective. For the highest possibility of grasping what is powerful in him lies in the lived experience of his effects upon ourselves, in the enduring conditions to which our own life is subjected because of him. Ranke's Luther, Goethe's Winkelmann, the Pericles of Thucydides proceeded from this kind of relation to the living power of a hero.

(12) *The Need for a Descriptive Psychology*

(From the *Introduction to the Human Studies*. G.S., I, 31-3)

Man as a fact prior to history and society is a fiction of genetic explanation ; the man whom sound analytical science has for its object is the individual as an element in society. The difficult problem which psychology has to solve is that of obtaining an analytical knowledge of the universal characteristics of man so understood.

Anthropology and psychology, so conceived, is the foundation of all knowledge of historical life, and of all rules for the guidance and progress of society. It is not merely a deeper contemplation of man by himself. A type of human nature always stands between the historian and his sources, from which he desires to awaken figures to throbbing life ; it stands no less between the political thinker and the realities of society, for whose progress he wishes to lay down rules. The sole aim of science is to make this subjective type correct and fruitful. Its aim is to unfold universal propositions whose subject is this individual unit, and whose



predicates are all the statements about him which can bear fruit in the understanding of society and history. But this task for psychology and anthropology involves a widening of its range. It must go beyond what has hitherto been its habit of investigating the regularities of mental life, and recognize typical differences within it, it must subject the artist's imagination and the genius of the practical man to description and analysis, and add to the study of the forms of mental life a description of the reality of its process and its content. This will fill the gap which has hitherto existed in the systems of social and historical reality between psychology on the one side and aesthetics, ethics, the study of political bodies and historical study on the other side : a region which has hitherto been occupied only by the imprecise generalizations of ordinary experience, the creations of the poets, descriptions of characters and incidents by men of the world, and indeterminate general truths woven by the historian into his narrative.

Psychology cannot solve the problems of such a fundamental science unless it keeps within the limits of a descriptive study, establishing facts and regularities among facts, whereas explanatory psychology, which aims at making the whole system of mental life deducible by means of certain assumptions, must be kept clearly distinguished from it. Only by this procedure can we obtain for explanatory psychology a precise, impartially established material which will allow of a verification of psychological hypotheses. But above all, it is only so that the departmental studies of the mind can receive a foundation which is itself secure, whereas at present even the best exponents of psychology build hypotheses on hypotheses.

(13) *The Human Studies Need a Psychological Foundation*

(From *Ideas concerning a Descriptive and Analytical Psychology*. G.S.,  
V, 147-8)

An empiricism which renounces the attempt to ground what happens in the mind on an understanding of the system of mental life is necessarily sterile. This can be shown in each several one of the human studies. Each of them needs psychological knowledge. Thus every analysis of the fact of religion comes upon concepts such as feeling, will, dependence, freedom, motive,

which can only be clarified in a psychological context. It has to do with connections within mental life, because it is in this life that the consciousness of God arises and obtains power. But these connections are conditioned by the universal regular system of the mind, and intelligible only in terms of it. Jurisprudence has before it, in concepts like those of norm, law, responsibility, psychical constructions which demand a psychological analysis. It cannot possibly describe the context in which the feeling of justice arises, or that in which ends become operative in law and wills are subjected to the legislative command, without a clear understanding of the regular connections in the life of every mind. The political sciences, which have to do with the outer organization of society, find in every kind of association the psychical facts of community, lordship, and dependence. These demand a psychological analysis. The history and theory of literature and art finds itself everywhere led back to the complex aesthetic basic attitudes of the beautiful, the sublime, the humorous or the comic. Without psychological analysis these remain for the literary historian obscure and lifeless conceptions. He cannot understand the life of any poet without a knowledge of the processes of imagination. It is so, and no building of barriers between departments can alter it : as the cultural systems, economic life, law, religion, art, and science, and the outer organization of societies in associations like the family, community, Church, and State, have arisen from the living system of the human mind, so in the end they can only be understood in terms of it. Psychical facts form the most important element in them, therefore without psychical analysis they cannot be made transparent. They contain system in themselves because mental life is a system. Thus the understanding of this inner system in us everywhere conditions the knowledge of them.

(14) *Psychology and Gnostic Wisdom*

(From *Ideas concerning a Descriptive and Analytical Psychology*. G.S.,  
V, 152-3)

The regularities which constitute the chief object of psychology in our century relate to the form of mental processes. The mighty reality of the content of mental life extends beyond this

psychology. In the works of the poets, in reflections on life such as have been uttered by great writers like Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, Augustine, Machiavelli, Montaigne, Pascal, is contained an understanding of man in his entire reality which is far in advance of any explanatory psychology. But to this day, in all the reflective literature which aims at grasping the full reality of man, its superiority of content is offset by its incapacity for systematic presentation. We find ourselves touched in the inmost heart by particular reflections. The very depths of life seem to be opened up in them. But as soon as we try to put together a clear system from them, they fail. Quite different from such reflections is the wisdom of the poets concerning men and concerning life, a wisdom which speaks to us only through figures and conjunctions of fortune, lit up here and there by reflections as by a bright flash of lightning. But this also contains no apprehensible general system of mental life. We are tired of hearing that *Lear*, *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth* contain more psychology than all the psychological textbooks together. If only these art-fanatics would unveil for us the psychology wrapped up in such works! If we understand by psychology a description of the regular system of mental life, the works of the poets contain no psychology at all; there is none concealed in them under any kind of veil, and by no *tour de force* can such a doctrine of the regularities of mental processes be extracted from them. But it is true that the way in which great writers and poets deal with human life presents psychology with a task and a material. Here is the intuitive understanding of the whole system which psychology too has to approach in its own way, by generalization and abstraction. One wishes for a psychology which could catch in the net of its descriptions that which these poets and writers contain over and above present-day psychology; a psychology which could take the thoughts which Augustine, Pascal, or Lichtenberg make so penetrating by one-sided brilliant illumination, and make them serviceable for human knowledge in a universally valid system; and only a descriptive and analytical psychology can come near solving this problem; only within its framework is the solution of this problem possible. For it begins with the system which is consciously lived and originally given with immediate power; it sets forth un mutilated even that which has so far been inaccessible to analysis.

(15) *The Basis and Methods of Psychology*

(From *Ideas concerning a Descriptive and Analytical Psychology*. G.S., V, 169-73)

We know natural objects from without through our senses. However we may break them up or divide them, we never reach their ultimate elements in this way. We supply such elements by an amplification of experience. Again, the senses, regarded from the point of view of their purely physiological function, never give us the unity of the object. This exists for us only through a synthesis of the sense-stimuli which arises from within. This statement would remain correct even if the analysis of unitary perception into sensations and their syntheses were regarded only as a heuristic device. And when we place objects in the relations of cause and effect, for this too the sensory impressions contain only the condition, which lies in regular succession, whereas the causal relation itself again arises through a synthesis which springs from within us. This statement also holds good whether we make this synthesis come from the understanding, or whether, as I explained in an earlier essay, the relation of cause and effect is only a derivative of the living experience of the will subjected to the pressure of another, so that the basis of this relation is a primary and constitutive element in experience, and it is only afterwards that the living relation is interpreted intellectually by abstract thought. Thus, however we may conceive the origin of our representations of objects and their causal relations, in any case the sensory stimuli, their coexistence and succession, include no part of the connection which lies in the objects and their causal relations.

How different is the way in which mental life is given to us ! In contrast to external perception, inner perception rests upon an awareness (*Innewerden*), a lived experience (*Erleben*), it is immediately given. Here, in sensation or in the feeling of pleasure accompanying it, something simple and indivisible is given to us. No matter how the sensation of a violet colour may have arisen, considered as an inner phenomenon it is something indivisible. If we perform an act of thought, a distinguishable plurality of inner facts is held together in it in the indivisible unity of a function, and thus there arises in inner experience something new, which has no analogy in nature. If we reflect

on the selfhood which simultaneously holds together a multitude of inner processes and draws together the successive moments of these processes into the unity of life, there stands out here even more amazingly something given inwardly as a lived experience, which has no resemblance to the processes of nature. Thus we continually experience (*erleben*) combinations and connections in ourselves, while we have to read combination and connection into the stimuli of sense. Again, what we thus experience (*erleben*) we can never make clear before the understanding (*Verstand*). The selfhood which holds together the simultaneous and successive incidents in the several processes of life, when brought before the tribunal of the understanding (*Verstand*), reveals the contradictions which Herbart emphasized long ago. We experience (*erleben*) yet another connection when, e.g., a conclusion flows from its premises in our minds. Here we meet a connection which leads from causes to effects. This connection also springs from within and is given in lived experience as a reality. It is thus that we conceive the ideas of unity in plurality, of parts in a whole, of causal relations, and by means of these understand nature by applying these conceptions to it under definite conditions of regular coexistence or succession.

We experience (*erfahren*) this system of connections in ourselves only in parts; now at this point, now at that, the light of observation falls upon it. For it is an important peculiarity of mental power that it can never raise to consciousness more than a limited number of elements in the inner system at once. But we are constantly becoming aware of such connections. Amid the immeasurable variability of the contents of consciousness the same connections continually recur, and so their form gradually stands out clearly. In the same way the consciousness of how these syntheses enter into more comprehensive combinations and finally form a system becomes continually clearer, more precise, and more assured. If one element has regularly evoked a second or a class of elements has regularly evoked another, and if in other repeated instances this second element or class of elements has evoked a third, and if this has gone on to a fourth or fifth element, there must finally take shape with universally valid certainty a consciousness of the connection between all these elements, a consciousness of the systematic connection between whole classes of elements. Likewise on other occasions, in an

attentive concentration of observing activity, we single out one from the chaos of processes and try to hold on to it by continuous perception or by memory in order to grasp it more precisely. In the swift (only too swift) stream of inner processes we thus single one out, isolate it, elevate it to a higher degree of awareness. In this selective activity is given the condition for the further process of abstraction. Only by an act of abstraction do we isolate a function or a type of connection from a concrete system. And only by an act of generalization do we state the ever-recurring form of a function or the constancy of definite gradings in sense-contents, the scale of intensities in sensation or feeling, as they are known to us all. In all these logical acts are included the processes of distinguishing, discovering likenesses, determining degrees of difference. Division and naming, in which the germ of definition lies, grow necessarily out of these logical activities. It might even be said that the elementary logical operations, and the way in which they flash forth in response to impressions and lived experiences, can be best grasped by reference to inner experience. Distinguishing, discovering likenesses, determining degrees of difference, combining, separating, abstracting, uniting several groups of facts into one, discovering a regularity in a multitude of facts—such operations are contained in every inner perception or emerge from its contacts with others. Hence we find, as the first peculiarity of the apprehension of inner states by which psychological enquiry is conditioned, the *intellectuality of inner perception*. Inner no less than outer perception comes about through the co-operation of the elementary logical processes. And precisely in inner perception we recognize with especial clarity how the elementary logical processes are inseparable from the apprehension of the elementary facts themselves.

Here we find a second peculiarity of the apprehension of mental states. This apprehension arises out of *lived experience* and remains bound up with it. In lived experience the processes of the *whole mind* work together. In it systematic connection is given, whereas the senses present only a manifold of particulars. The particular process is carried in lived experience by the whole totality of mental life, and the systematic connections within it and between it and the whole life of the mind belong to immediate experience (*Erfahrung*). This already determines the nature of the understanding (*Verstehen*) of ourselves and others. We

explain (*erklären*) by means of purely intellectual processes, but we understand (*verstehen*) by means of the co-operation of all the powers of the mind in apprehension. And in understanding we start from the system of the whole, which is given to us as a living reality (*der uns lebendig gegeben ist*), to make the particular intelligible to ourselves in terms of it. The fact that we live in the consciousness of the system of the whole is what enables us to understand a particular statement, a particular gesture or a particular action. All psychological thinking retains this fundamental trait, that the apprehension of the whole makes possible and determines the interpretation of the particular part. The theoretical reconstruction of human nature in general by psychology must adhere to the original procedure of understanding if it is to remain sound, vital, life-revealing, and fruitful for the understanding (*Verständnis*) of life. The experienced (*erfahrene*) system of mental life must remain the foundation of psychology, safely grounded on immediate lived experience, however deep it may penetrate into the details of experimental investigation.

If safety in psychological procedure thus rests on the full reality of its every object, and on the immediate givenness of the inner connection in it, it is strengthened by a further peculiarity of inner experience. The particular mental processes in us, the combinations of mental facts which we inwardly perceive, arise in us with a varying consciousness of their value for the whole system of our life. Thus in inner apprehension itself the *essential* is distinguished from the *inessential*. The psychological abstraction which elicits the systematic unity of life possesses, in this immediate consciousness of the value of particular functions for the whole, a guiding clue for its activity which our knowledge of nature does not possess.

From all this there emerges a further fundamental trait of psychological investigation, viz., that it grows out of lived experience itself, and must always retain its firm roots in this if it is to grow sound and tall. To lived experience are attached the simple logical activities which we find united in psychological observation. They enable us to fix what is observed by describing it, to give it name and designation, to survey it by dividing it up. *Spontaneously, as it were, psychological thinking passes over into psychological investigation.* It is just as it is in the living

human studies. Jurisprudence attaches itself to juridical thinking, and political economy attaches itself to economic reflection and the regulation of economic relations by the State.

(16) *The Limits of Generalization in History*

(From the *Introduction to the Human Studies*. G.S., I, 90-2)

We have seen that the historian's art has power to contemplate in the particular the general laws of the system of human affairs. Certainly it would be a poor idea to suppose that this was the one and only exclusive form in which the ordered system of this immeasurable world of history and society exists for us. Yet this art of description will always constitute a great task for historiography, and one which can never be robbed of its value by the mania for generalization of certain recent English and French thinkers. For we wish to contemplate reality, and the course of our epistemological enquiry will show that reality as it is, in its actual being, unaltered by any medium, exists for us only in this world of the mind. And indeed we find in the contemplation of all human affairs an interest not of the intellect alone, but of the heart, of sympathy, of enthusiasm, in which Goethe rightly saw the fairest fruit of historical vision. Self-surrender makes the inner being of the true born historian into a universe which mirrors the whole historical world. In this universe of moral forces the unique and singular has a quite different significance from what it has in external nature. The apprehension of it is not a means, but an end in itself; for the desire on which it rests is ineradicable and is involved in what is highest in our nature. That is why the historian's eye also fastens with a natural preference upon the extraordinary. Without wishing it, often without knowing it, he too performs a continual abstraction. For his eye loses its fresh sensitivity to those parts of his material which recur in all historical phenomena, as the effect of an impression which bears persistently upon one particular place in the retina dulls off. It needed the philanthropic motives of the eighteenth century to bring back into full visibility the everyday things which are common to all in a period, *les mœurs* as Voltaire expresses it, and the changes which take place in respect of these things, along with the extra-



ordinary, the actions of kings and the destinies of States. And the basic facts of human nature and the world's life, which are alike at all times, never become objects of the historian's descriptive art at all. This art, too, therefore rests upon an abstraction. But it is an involuntary abstraction, and since it springs from the strongest motives in human nature, as a rule we hardly notice it. When we share the life of a past event, through the art of historical presentation, we are taught as if by the drama of life itself; our being is widened, and psychical powers which are mightier than our own heighten our existence.

Therefore the sociological theories and the philosophies of history, which see in the description of the singular a mere raw material for their abstractions, are false. This superstition, which subjects the works of the historians to a mysterious process in order by a kind of alchemy to turn the material of particular facts which is found there into the pure gold of abstraction and compel history to yield its last secret, is quite as fanciful as was ever the dream of an alchemistic nature-philosopher who thought to entice nature into giving up her word of power. There is no such last simple word of history, uttering its true sense, any more than there is such a thing to be extracted from nature. And quite as erroneous as this superstition is the procedure which commonly goes with it. This procedure seeks to unify the views already formulated by the historians. But the thinker who has the historical world for his object must become master of history and all its methods by direct contact with the immediate raw material. He must subject himself to the same law of hard work on the raw material to which the historian is subject. To take the material which through the eye and the labour of the historian has already been combined into an artistic whole, and bring it into a system by means of psychological or metaphysical principles, is an operation which will always be stricken with sterility. If we are to speak of a philosophy of history, it can only mean historical research with a philosophical aim and with philosophical aids.

(17) *Sociology*

(Note prepared by Dilthey for inclusion in a new edition of the *Introduction to the Human Studies*, and published posthumously.  
G.S., I, 420-3)

## I

My polemic against sociology concerned the stage in its development which was characterized by Comte, Spencer, Schäffle, Lilienfeld. The conception of it which was contained in their works was that of a science of the common life of men in society, including among its objects also law, morality, and religion. It was therefore not a theory of the forms which psychical life assumes under the conditions of social relationships between individuals. Such a conception of sociology has been put forward by Simmel. Sociology has then for its object the social form as such, which remains the same amid variations. This social form as such appears, according to him, in a number of distinguishable types of relationship between men. Such are superiority and inferiority, imitation, division of labour, rivalry, the self-maintenance of a social group, the formation of hierarchies, representation, party-formation. And the problem is to establish these forms inductively and interpret them psychologically. Society is only the sum of these particular uniting forces which operate between these elements. Society as such would no longer exist if these uniting forces fell away.

I must naturally recognize as legitimate the demarcation of such a field of study; it rests on the principle that relations which remain constant as forms of common life amid the variations of purpose and content in it can be studied by themselves. I myself in my *Introduction*, earlier than Simmel, characterized the outward organization of society as a special field in which, psychologically regarded, relations of lordship and dependence and relations of community are operative. My conception differs from Simmel's mainly in that I cannot reduce these uniting forces simply to the psychic factors alluded to, but regard the natural relationship of sexual community, procreation, the consequent homogeneity of family and race, and on the other hand local contact, as equally important.

My rejection of sociology cannot therefore apply to such a discipline as this, but it applies to a science which aims at compre-

hending everything which happens *de facto* in human society in a single study. The principle underlying this synthesis would be that what happens in human society in the course of its history must be comprehended in the unity of one and the same object.

This is no more allowable than it would be to say that, since in nature mechanical, physical, chemical, and vital processes are bound up together and take place within the same material physical world, therefore they must be comprehended in one science. In fact the natural sciences merely draw the conclusion that the particular sciences must always be ready to subordinate the general truths which they discover to more general ones, e.g., astronomical to mechanical truths or physiological to chemical, or on the other hand to look for applications of mechanical truths in astronomy, etc. But a general science of nature is never more than a tentative summary, not the starting-point. And in the same way the human studies strive to establish the relations between the truths which they discover by means of subordination and application, but they cannot begin with the constitution of such a general and still problematical science.

## 2

If we imagine such a science in action, it may be a summary, without a unitary principle, of all the human studies which have been extracted as separate sciences from the web of life in society. Then it is, as Simmel rightly observes, the great vessel to which the label "sociology" is attached—a new name but no new knowledge. Or it may be the encyclopaedia of the special studies which arise on the basis of psychology, brought together under the guidance of epistemology, logic, and methodology. Then sociology only means the second part of the philosophy of the human studies.

But the sociology of Comte, Spencer, etc., is not meant in this sense. Rather it sees in society, in the differentiation and integration at work in it, in the solidarity of interests, in its progress towards an order corresponding to the general interest, the principle by which religious life, art, morality, law can be explained. In this sense I have referred to sociology as "meta-physical".

The errors which confront us here are as follows. 1. Our datum is individuals in social relations. This fundamental fact

has two sides. The individual by virtue of his structural unity forms a self-contained whole. Neither the ground nor the purpose of the individual existence can be reduced by any demonstration to society. From this it becomes clear that it is a metaphysical hypothesis if the latter assumption is made.

2. Much in the purposive systems of society can be deduced from mere sociality. But even a system like the development of philosophy has its ground and purpose rooted as much in the individual as in society. This two-sidedness shows itself still more clearly in religious life and in art. If we could conceive an isolated individual treading the earth, supposing him to live long enough to develop, he would evolve these functions out of himself in complete isolation.

3. But in law also is contained a principle of obligation to fulfil reciprocal agreements; which does not work only through social pressure, and the deduction of which on utilitarian principles is an unsatisfactory hypothesis. And it is the same with morality.

4. Therefore this sociology is not scientific knowledge defined by reference to a particular field, but it is a definite tendency of thought which makes itself felt in the nineteenth century in a given situation. And it is a method, determined by this tendency, which assumes a principle of explanation and brings as many facts as possible under it. Such a method is heuristically valuable, and the evolutionary doctrine of society has in fact been a life-giving force. But when it comes up against the above-mentioned facts, which can be explained as well on individual as on social grounds, its inability to constitute a science shows itself. Thus in the end sociology is the name for a number of works which have handled the facts of society according to a great principle of explanation, or for a tendency in explanatory procedure. It is not the name of a science.

(18) *The Peculiar Nature of the Human Studies*

(From *The Construction of the Historical World in the Human Studies*, chapter I, *Delimitation of the Human Studies*. G.S., VII, 86-7)

We can now mark off the human studies from the natural sciences by quite clear criteria. These lie in the attitude of mind described above, by which, in contrast with natural-

scientific knowledge; the object of the human studies is constituted. Mankind, if apprehended only by perception and perceptual knowledge, would be for us a physical fact, and as such it would be accessible only to natural-scientific knowledge. It becomes an object for the human studies only in so far as human states are consciously lived, in so far as they find expression in living utterances, and in so far as these expressions are understood. Of course this relationship of life, expression, and understanding embraces not only the gestures, looks, and words in which men communicate, or the enduring mental creations in which the depths of the creator's mind open themselves to the spectator, or the permanent objectifications of mind in social structures, through which the common background of human nature shines and is permanently visible and certain to us. The mind-body unit of life is known to itself through the same double relationship of lived experience and understanding, it is aware of itself in the present, it rediscovers itself in memory as something that once was; but when it tries to hold fast and to apprehend its states, when it turns its attention upon itself, the narrow limits of such an introspective method of self-knowledge make themselves felt. Only from his actions, his fixed utterances, his effects upon others, can man learn about himself; thus he learns to know himself only by the round-about way of understanding. What we once were, how we developed and became what we are, we learn from the way in which we acted, the plans which we once adopted, the way in which we made ourselves felt in our vocation, from old dead letters, from judgments on us which were spoken long ago. In short, it is through the process of understanding that life in its depths is made clear to itself, and on the other hand we understand ourselves and others only when we transfer our own lived experience into every kind of expression of our own and other people's life. Thus everywhere the relation between lived experience, expression, and understanding is the proper procedure by which mankind as an object in the human studies exists for us. The human studies are thus founded on this relation between lived experience, expression, and understanding. Here for the first time we reach a quite clear criterion by which the delimitation of the human studies can be definitively carried out. A study belongs to the human studies only if its object becomes accessible to us through the attitude which

is founded on the relation between life, expression, and understanding.

From this common nature of the studies in question follow all the peculiarities which have been emphasized in discussions on the human studies, or cultural studies, or history, as constituting their nature. Thus the peculiar relation in which the unique, singular, individual stands here to universal regularities. Then the combination which takes place here of statements of fact, judgments of value, and ideas of purpose. Again, "the apprehension of the singular or individual is in them as much an ultimate end as is the development of abstract uniformities".<sup>1</sup> But still more will result from this; all the leading concepts with which this group of studies operates are different from the corresponding ones in the field of natural science.

(19) *Three Classes of Statements in the Human Studies*

(Chapter VI of the *Introduction to the Human Studies*. G.S., I, 26-7)

The human studies as they exist and operate, by virtue of that logic of facts which was at work in their history (not according to the wishes of the rash architects who desire to rebuild them), combine in themselves three distinct classes of statements. One class of them assert a reality which is given in perception; they include the historical component in knowledge. Another class unfold the uniform relations between parts of this reality which are singled out by abstraction: they form the theoretical component. The third class express value-judgments and prescribe rules: in them the practical component in the human studies is comprised. Facts, theorems, value-judgments and rules: of these three classes of propositions the human studies are composed. And the relation between the historical, the abstract theoretical, and the practical tendencies in the conception of the human studies is a common basic relationship pervading them all. The apprehension of the singular or individual is in them (since they are the standing refutation of Spinoza's principle, *omnis determinatio est negatio*) as much an ultimate end as is the development of abstract uniformities. From the first root in consciousness up to the highest peak the system of value-judgments and imperatives is independent of that of the first two

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from Dilthey's own *Introduction to the Human Studies*.

classes. The relation between these three tasks for the thinking consciousness can only be developed in the course of the epistemological analysis. . . . In any case statements about reality remain radically separate from value-judgments and imperatives, and thus arise two kinds of propositions which are different in principle. And at the same time it must be recognized that this difference within the human studies has for its consequence a duality in their structure. As they have grown up, the human studies include, along with the knowledge of what is, the consciousness of value-judgments and imperatives as forming a system in which values, ideals, rules, the tendency towards shaping the future, are bound up together. A political judgment which condemns an institution is not true or false, but right or wrong, in so far as its tendency or aim is estimated ; on the other hand, a political judgment which discusses the relations between this institution and other institutions can be true or false. Only when this insight becomes a guiding principle for the theory of statements, assertions, and judgments, can there arise an epistemological groundwork which does not compress the actually existing human studies into the narrow frame of a knowledge of uniformities on the analogy of natural science, and in that way mutilate them, but comprehends and upholds them as they have grown up.

(20) *Individuum est ineffabile*

(From the *Introduction to the Human Studies*. G.S., I, 28-9)

The datum which is the starting-point of enquiry in the natural sciences is the sensible appearance of bodies of various sizes, which move in space, extend and expand, shrink and diminish, in which changes of character take place. Only by degrees have these sciences made their way to more correct views of the constitution of matter. In this respect our intelligence stands in a much more advantageous relation to the reality of history and society. The unit which is the element in the very complicated structure of society is given immediately to the intelligence—it is itself—while in the natural sciences it has to be inferred. The subjects to which thought, according to its invariable law, attaches the predications through which all knowledge comes about, are in the natural sciences elements which are obtained by a division of external reality, a breaking

and splitting up of things, and then only as hypotheses ; in the human studies they are real units given as facts in inner experience. Natural science builds matter up out of small elementary particles incapable of independent existence and only conceivable as components of molecules ; the units which interact in the marvelously complex whole of history and society are individuals, wholes composed of mind and body, each of which is distinct from every other, each of which is a world. Indeed, the world is nowhere else but in the consciousness of such individuals. This immensity of a mind-body whole, in which in the last resort the immensity of nature is contained, can be illustrated by the analysis of the world of ideas, where from sensations and ideas an individual intuition is built up, which then, whatever wealth of elements it may comprise, enters as only one element into the conscious combination and separation of ideas. And this singularity of each and every such individual who operates at any point in the immense cosmos of mind can be followed out into his several components, according to the principle, *individuum est ineffabile*, and only so does it become known in its full significance.

(21) *Some Peculiarities of the Human Studies*

(From the *Introduction to the Human Studies*. G.S., I, 37-8)

The uniformities which can be established in the field of society are in number, importance, and precision of statement far behind the laws which it has been found possible to lay down for nature on the sure foundation of relations in space and the properties of motion. The movements of the stars, not only of our planetary system, but of stars whose light takes years to reach our eyes, can be shown to be subject to the simple law of gravitation and calculated for long periods ahead. The social sciences are unable to guarantee such a satisfaction to the intellect. The difficulties in knowing a single psychic unit are multiplied by the great variety and singularity of these units as they work together in society, by the complexity of the natural conditions under which they are united, and by the piling up of interactions which takes place in the sequence of many generations, and which does not allow us to deduce the conditions of earlier times directly from human nature as we know it to-day, or to infer the con-



ditions of to-day from a universal type of human nature. And yet all this is more than outweighed by the fact that I myself, who enjoy and know myself from within, am a component in this social body, and that the other components are like me and therefore comprehensible to me in their inner being. I understand the life of society. The individual is on the one hand an element in the interactions of society, a point of intersection for the various systems of these interactions, reacting to their influences with conscious direction of will and action, and at the same time he is the intelligence which contemplates and investigates all this. The play of (to us) soulless efficient causes is here replaced by that of ideas, feelings, and motives. And there is no limit to the singularity, the wealth in the play of interaction, which is here revealed. The waterfall is composed of homogeneous forward-thrusting particles of water ; but a single sentence, which is but a breath in the mouth, shakes the whole living society of a continent through a play of motives in absolutely individual units ; so different is the interaction appearing here, i.e., the motive arising from the idea, from any other kind of cause. Other distinguishing characteristics follow from this. The cognitive faculty which is at work in the human studies is the whole man ; great achievements in them proceed not from mere intellectual processes, but from a vigour of personal life. This mental activity finds itself attracted and satisfied by the singular and factual in this world of mind, without any further desire to know the total system, and with its cognitive aspect is bound up a practical tendency in value-judgment, ideal, and rule.

(22) *No Absolute Values in History*

(From *The Construction of the Historical World in the Human Studies*.  
G.S., VII, 173)

This disposes of the view which sees the task of history in the progress from relative values, obligations, norms, or goods to unconditional ones. That would take us out of the field of the empirical studies into the field of speculation. For history does indeed know of various assertions of something unconditional as value, norm, or good. Such assertions appear everywhere in history—now as given in the divine will, now in a rational concept of perfection, in a teleological order of the world, in a

universally valid norm of our conduct which is transcendently based. But historical experience knows only the process, so important for it, of making these assertions : on its own grounds it knows nothing of their universal validity. As it follows the process of the shaping of such unconditional values, goods, or norms, it observes with regard to various of them how life produced them, but how the unconditional assertion itself became possible only because of the limitation of the horizon of the age. From there it looks out upon the totality of life in the fullness of its historical manifestations. It observes the unresolved strife of these unconditional assertions with one another. The question whether it can be shown with logical cogency that the subsumption of experience under such unconditional principles, which is undoubtedly a historical fact, must be referred to a factor in man which is universal and not limited in time—this question leads into the ultimate depths of transcendental philosophy, which lie beyond the empirical circle of history, and from which even philosophy cannot wrest an assured answer. And even if this question were decided in the affirmative, this could be of no service to the historian in selecting, understanding, and discovering connections, unless the content of this unconditional principle can be determined. Thus the intrusion of speculation into the historian's field of experience can hardly count on success. The historian cannot renounce the attempt to understand history in terms of itself on the basis of the analysis of the various systems of activity.

(23) *Philosophy as Heightened Awareness*

(From a posthumously published essay, *The Historical Consciousness and the World-Outlooks*. G.S., VIII, 31-2)

The distinguishing characteristic of the philosopher was bound to be grasped most clearly and simply at the time when philosophy as a distinct activity first took shape. Heraclitus and the Socratic school agree in their account of it. We will try to formulate it as generally as possible. What man does from inborn naïve impulses in imagination and thought, in making and doing, the philosopher raises to consciousness ; a kind of heightened awareness is characteristic of him. But all higher consciousness shows itself in bringing inner and outer

experiences, their parts and their relations, to clarity. Therefore logical energy is indispensable for the philosopher's work. Thus there arises in him a heightened logical awareness which brings the natural instinctive operations into a clear connected system. He shows everywhere the reflectiveness of Epimetheus ; detailed pieces of knowledge about nature set him the conscious task of grasping the unity of all nature. The aims of men and society and the ethical laws of the religions set him the conscious tasks of seeking out the highest good for individuals and for society, the highest rules of personal and political life, the relations between them, and the ground of their authority. Everywhere he brings to bear his labour of concepts, his logical circumspection, the higher consciousness which he derives from the power of the concept to enlighten and to bestow independence. Logical awareness, extending over objective perceptions, ideals, and goods, thus creates a logical system, and this goes to the roots of things to find a basis and justification for its work . . .

Philosophy is therefore a personal peculiarity, a type of character, which has always been credited with the capacity to set the mind free from tradition, dogma, prejudice, from the power of the instinctive affections, and even from the dominion of external limiting circumstances. . . . And this is the sense in which we commonly use this word. There is a philosophic attitude which has nothing to do with the profession of a philosophical specialist. In every poet who rises to an ideal of life and a *Weltanschauung*, even though it is expressed only in the system of images which he sets before our fancy, we commonly believe that there is a streak of philosophy. For there is in him a capacity to make oneself conscious of life in its wholeness, in its universal meaning, a capacity based on the practice of facing every phenomenon of life with a heightened degree of reflection. That is why the philosopher is born, like the poet ; the true philosopher, like the true poet, has a touch of genius.

#### (24) *Two Conflicting Tendencies in Philosophy*

(From *What is Philosophy?* G.S., V, 365)

Let me draw together all the empirical data which we have run through. The name "philosophy" has turned out to be distributed over objects of the most various kinds. The nature

of philosophy has shown itself to possess an extraordinary fluidity, constantly setting itself problems anew and adapting itself to the state of culture. It regards problems as worth while and again it casts them away ; in one stage of knowledge it regards problems as soluble which it afterwards lets drop as incapable of solution. But always we saw at work in it the same tendency towards universality and towards logical grounding, the same direction of the mind towards the whole of the given world. And always the metaphysical urge to penetrate into the kernel of this whole is at odds with the positive demand for universal validity in its knowledge. These are the two sides which belong to its essence and which also distinguish it from the most nearly related fields of culture. In contrast with the special sciences it seeks the solution of the riddle of the world and life. And in contrast with art and religion it aims at giving this solution in a universally valid form.

(25) *The Essence of Philosophy and its Diversities in Detail*

(From *What is Philosophy?* G.S., V, 413-15)

Philosophy has been found to be a group of very various functions, which are brought together in a concept of the nature of philosophy through insight into the regular connections between them. A function is always relative to a teleological system and designates a group of related operations which are performed within this whole. The conception is not taken from the analogy of organic life, nor does it designate a faculty or an original capacity. The functions of philosophy are relative to the teleological structure of the philosophizing subject and that of society. They are operations in which the person turns in upon himself and at the same time exerts influence on the outer world ; in this they are akin to those of religion and poetry. Thus philosophy is an operation which springs from the need of the individual mind for reflection upon its activity, for inner clarity and firmness in action, for a stable form of relation to the whole of human society, and it is likewise a function which is grounded in the structure of society and necessary for the perfection of its life. It is therefore a function which takes place in the same way in many minds, and binds them together in a social and historical unity. In

this last sense it is a cultural system. For the marks of a cultural system are uniformity of operation in every individual who belongs to the system, and an affinity between the individuals in whom this operation takes place. If this affinity assumes stable forms, organizations arise in a cultural system. Of all systems of purposes, art and philosophy are those which bind individuals least closely to one another. For the function which the artist or the philosopher fulfils is not conditioned by any organized form of life ; its realm is that of the mind's highest freedom. And though the attachment of the philosopher to organizations like universities and academies heightens his influence upon society, his life-element is and remains the freedom of his thought, which must never be infringed, and on which depend not only his philosophical character, but also the trust in his unconditional sincerity, and therefore his influence.

The most general characteristic attaching to all the functions of philosophy is based on the nature of objective apprehension and conceptual thought. So regarded, philosophy appears merely as the most consistent, powerful, and comprehensive kind of thinking ; and there is no fixed boundary separating it from the empirical consciousness. It follows from the form of conceptual thought that judgment advances to highest generalizations, the formation and division of concepts leads to an architectonic of them with a highest point, and the relating of them to an all-embracing system and the search for their grounds leads on to an ultimate principle. In this activity thought is directed towards the common object of all thought-acts performed by different persons, the system of sense-perception within which the plurality of things is ordered in space and the manifold of their changes and movements in time—the universe. In this universe all feelings and acts of will are comprehended by virtue of the determinate location of the bodies belonging to them and the perceptual elements embedded in them. All values, ends, or goods laid down by these feelings or acts of will are dovetailed into it. Human life is within its embrace. And as thought strives to express and unify the entire content of perceptions, lived experiences, values, ends, which is enjoyed or given in the empirical consciousness, in experience and the sciences of experience, it advances from the connections between things and changes in the world to the concept of the universe, it goes back in search

of grounds to a world-principle, a world-cause, it seeks to determine the value, sense, and meaning of the world, and it asks about a world-purpose. Everywhere where this procedure of generalizing, of arranging things into a whole, of searching for grounds, is led on by the drive of knowledge to free itself from the particular need and the limited interest, it passes over into philosophy. And everywhere where the subject, who enters into relation with this world in his activity, rises in the same spirit to reflection upon this his activity, this reflection is philosophical. The fundamental characteristic in all the functions of philosophy is therefore the drive of the mind which moves forward beyond its attachment to determinate, finite, limited interests, and strives to give every theory that arises from a limited need a place in a culminating idea. This drive of thought is based on its inherent laws, it answers to needs of human nature which we can hardly analyse with confidence, e.g., joy in knowledge, the need of an ultimate stability in man's attitude to the world, the effort to overcome the limited conditions by which life is bound. Every mental attitude seeks for a fixed point exempt from relativity.

This universal function of philosophy expresses itself, under the various conditions of historical life, in all the modes of philosophic activity which we have surveyed. Particular functions of great energy arise out of the manifold conditions of life—the elaboration of a *Weltanschauung* into a universally valid form, the reflection of knowledge upon itself, the relating of the theories which arise in the particular purposive systems to the unity of all knowledge, a spirit of criticism, of universal comprehension, and of enquiry into grounds, pervading all culture. They all turn out to be particular modes of activity which are based on the unitary nature of philosophy. For philosophy adapts itself to every stage in the development of culture and to all the conditions involved in its historical situation. And so we can explain the continual changes in its modes of activity, the adaptability and flexibility with which it now unfolds itself into the broad lines of a system, now makes its whole force felt on a particular problem, and constantly transfers the energy of its work to new tasks.

(26) *Three Types of Outlook in Philosophy*(From *What is Philosophy?* G.S., V, 402-4)

The historical induction by which these types must be established cannot be set forth here. The empirical indications from which this induction begins lie in the inner affinity between metaphysical systems, in the relation of transformation whereby one system conditions another, in the consciousness of mutual affinity and opposition among thinkers, but above all in the inner historical continuity in which such a type takes clearer and clearer shape and lays its foundations deeper and deeper, and in the influence which has been exerted by such typical systems, e.g., those of Spinoza, Leibniz or Hegel, of Kant or Fichte, of d'Alembert or Hobbes or Comte. Between these types there are forms in which these outlooks have not yet attained to clear separation. Other forms aim, in defiance of intellectual consistency, at holding on to the sum-total of metaphysical themes; these always show themselves unable to bear fruit in the further development of the outlook and without influence in life and literature, however strong they may be in the complicated system of their foundations or in the possession of technical advantages. From the rich variety of such nuances of outlook the consistent, pure, influential types stand out significantly. From Democritus, Lucretius, Epicurus to Hobbes, from him to the Encyclopaedists, to modern materialism as well as to Comte and Avenarius, in spite of the great variety of systems, a connection can be traced which unites these groups of systems in a single type, whose first form may be styled *materialist* or *naturalist*, and whose further development leads logically under the conditions of the critical consciousness to *positivism* as understood by Comte. Heracleitus, the strict school of Stoicism, Spinoza, Leibniz, Shaftesbury, Goethe, Schelling, Schleiermacher, Hegel signalize the stages of *objective idealism*. Plato, the Hellenistic and Roman philosophy of life which Cicero represents, Christian speculation, Kant, Fichte, Maine de Biran with the French thinkers related to him, and Carlyle form the stages in the development of the *idealism of freedom*. From the inner law which operates, as has been shown, in the formation of metaphysical systems, there follows the differentiation of metaphysics into these groups of systems. And this development and the modifications which appear in it are

affected in the first place by the process which we have described, in which our relation to reality passes through certain determinate stages ; thus positivism was recognized above as embodying the most outstanding case of the non-metaphysical procedure which seeks a firm basis for knowledge, whereas now we are regarding positivism in its totality as a form of *Weltanschauung* epistemologically grounded on the procedure in question. Again, the development and detailed differentiation of the types is conditioned by the process in which, on the basis of the relations of values, ends, and obligations, ideal conceptions have unfolded themselves among mankind.

Knowledge of reality has its foundation in the study of nature. For this alone can wring from the facts an order according to laws. In the system of knowledge of the world which thus arises, the concept of causality holds sway. When this concept one-sidedly determines experience, there is no room for the conceptions of value and end. And since in our view of reality the physical world so predominates in extent and power that the units of mental life appear only as interpolations in the text of the physical world, and since further the knowledge of this physical world alone possesses, in mathematics and experimentation, the means to reach the goal of the cognitive attitude—this explanation of the world takes on the form of an interpretation of the world of mind in terms of the physical world. And when, finally, from the critical standpoint the phenomenal character of the physical world is recognized, naturalism and materialism change into scientifically-determined positivism.

Or the outlook is determined by the attitude typical of the affective life. It occupies the standpoint of the values of things, of life-values, of the meaning and the sense of the world. All reality then appears as the expression of something inward, and so it is conceived as the unfolding of a mental system operating consciously or unconsciously. This standpoint therefore sees in each of the numerous, divided, limited individual agents an immanent divine principle which determines phenomena according to that relation of teleological causality which is to be found in consciousness. Objective idealism, panentheism or pantheism arise in this way.

But if the volitional attitude determines the view of the world, then arises the schema of mind's independence of nature, or of



its transcendence. By projection of this upon the universe the conceptions of divine personality, of creation, and of the sovereignty of personality in face of the world-process take shape.

Each of these outlooks contains in the sphere of objective apprehension a combination of knowledge of the universe, valuation of life, and principles of conduct. Their power lies in the fact that they give an inner unity to personality in its various operations. And each of them has a power of attraction and a possibility of consistent development, in that it grasps the ambiguous reality of life from the standpoint and according to the laws of one of our typical attitudes.

(27) *Historicism its Own Cure*

(From a posthumously published dialogue, *Modern Man and the Conflict of Outlooks*. G.S., VIII, 232-3)

"The knife of historical relativism," I continued, "which has cut to pieces all metaphysics and religion, must also bring healing. We only need to be thorough. We must make philosophy itself an object of philosophical study. There is need of a science which shall apply evolutionary conceptions and comparative methods to the study of the systems themselves. It stands to the history of philosophy as comparative philology stands to the history of language—and if anyone cares to go beyond the separation of the two, I shall be the last to oppose him . . .

"All *Weltanschauungen* arise from the objectification of the ways in which living man, perceiving and thinking, feeling and desiring, seeking to have his way with things, experiences the world. From the countless points of view in the sequence of generations arise objectifications without number. If someone of unprejudiced mind wishes to combine all that he can relive in himself, if he desires to look the world in the face in order to understand its inwardness, he is confronted by features which refuse to blend in a single interpretation. A likeness to our intelligence in the objective order of natural laws, but also complete singularity in the way that these very laws are linked together in this order in relation to the given elements. Goodness and frightfulness seem continually to alternate on Nature's countenance. Everything seems designed to produce a maximum

of life, and yet this same Nature carelessly destroys her seeds. In us a longing for a just order of things, and in society the victory of the strong and ruthless. We admire sacrifice and devotion, and yet a world in which they were dominant would offer boundless scope to the bad man. In us the feeling of freedom, yet in an outward view all is necessity."

(28) *Philosophy and the Consciousness of Relativity*

(From *What is Philosophy?* G.S., V, 364)

Every solution of the philosophical problems belongs from a historical point of view to a particular date and a particular situation at that date : man, the creature of time, so long as he works in time, finds the security of his existence in the fact that he lifts his creations out of the stream of time as something lasting : this illusion gives to his creative work a greater joy and power. Herein lies the perpetual contradiction between creative minds and the historical consciousness. It is natural to them to wish to forget the past and to disregard the better future that is coming : but the historical consciousness lives in the comprehension of all ages, and it observes in all creativity of individuals the accompanying relativity and transience. This contradiction is the secret trouble which present-day philosophy is silently bearing. For in the philosopher of the present day his own creative activity comes together with the historical consciousness, because to-day in the absence of the latter his philosophy would cover only a fragment of reality. His creative activity must become aware of itself as a link in the historical system, in which he consciously brings about a conditioned effect. Then he is able to resolve this contradiction, as will appear in a later context : he can now calmly surrender himself to the power of the historical consciousness, and can see even his own daily work from the standpoint of the historical system in which the essence of philosophy realizes itself in the variety of its appearances.

(29) *Relativism as Liberation*

(From *What is Philosophy?* G.S., V, 405-6)

But if for these reasons no metaphysic can satisfy the demands for scientific proof, yet philosophy still retains a firm point in the

relation between the subject and his world, by virtue of which each attitude of the subject brings to expression one side of the universe. Philosophy cannot comprehend the world in its essence by means of a metaphysical system, and set forth this knowledge in a way that is universally valid ; but as in all serious poetry there is disclosed an aspect of life which has not been seen before, as poetry in this way reveals to us the various sides of life in ever new works, as we do not possess a comprehensive view of life in any work of art and yet approximate to it by means of them all : so in the typical outlooks of philosophy we meet a world such as it appears when a powerful philosophical personality makes one of the attitudes to it predominate over the others and subordinates the other categories to the categories native to the one attitude. Thus from all the enormous labour of the metaphysical mind there remains the historical consciousness, which repeats that labour in itself and so experiences in it the inscrutable depths of the world. The last word of the mind which has run through all the outlooks is not the relativity of them all, but the sovereignty of the mind in face of each one of them, and at the same time the positive consciousness of the way in which, in the various attitudes of the mind, the one reality of the world exists for us.

## NOTES ON SOME TECHNICAL TERMS IN DILTHEY

SCIENCE, STUDY, DISCIPLINE, *Wissenschaft*.

"By a science is commonly understood a complex of propositions whose elements are concepts, i.e., are completely determinate, constant and universally valid throughout the chain of thought, whose connections are well grounded, and in which the parts are combined with the aim of contributing to a whole, because this combination of propositions enables us either to think an element of reality in its completeness, or to give rules to a branch of human activity" (G.S., I, 4-5). In short, any organized body of thought, whether mathematics, natural science, history, sociology, law, philosophy, or theology. Because "science" in English has not this broad meaning, I have often rendered *Wissenschaft* by *study* or *discipline*.

THE HUMAN STUDIES. *Die Geisteswissenschaften*.

"The whole group of studies which have as their object the reality of history and society" (G.S., I, 4). Known in French as *les sciences morales*, in J. S. Mill *the moral sciences*. But "science" is too narrow in English for *Wissenschaft*. "Moral", "mental", "spiritual", and "humane" are all unsatisfactory renderings of the other half of the German word. I have called them the *human studies* at the suggestion of Professor A. W. P. Wolters, of Reading. The "cultural studies" (*Kulturwissenschaften*) of Rickert and his followers are a narrower group, not including any generalizing and explanatory sciences such as psychology and economics.

LIFE. *Das Leben*.

In Dilthey not a biological, but a psychological and quasi-metaphysical term, referring to all mental states, processes, and activities, conscious or unconscious, and especially those creative and expressive activities which are the substance of history and the object of the human studies.

MIND. *Der Geist*.

Not contrasted by Dilthey with *Seele* or *Psyche*, as in some

modern writers who make *Seele* or *Psyche* mean the sensuous-affective-appetitive level of mental life and *Geist* the rational level. In Dilthey *Geist* is a comprehensive term covering all levels. *Psychisch*, *seelisch*, *geistig* are not clearly distinguished. Dilthey is more interested in the interpenetration of the levels than in the distinctions between them.

ATTITUDE. *Verhaltung, Verhaltungsweise.*

The relation between the conscious subject as such and the content or object of which he is conscious. According to Dilthey this relation must belong to one of three types, viz., cognitive, affective, or conative, which coexist and influence one another but are irreducible to one another. (There are also conscious states in which there is no attitude involved, because there is no distinction between subject and content or object; e.g., elementary sensations and emotions which are not made objects of attention and given an objective reference.)

LIVED EXPERIENCE. *Das Erleben, Das Erlebnis.*

Inner states, processes, and activities in so far as we consciously have them, or "live through" (*erleben*) or "are aware of" (*innewerden*) them, or "enjoy" them in Alexander's phrase, but do not make them objects to ourselves by introspection. This is the normal condition of the mental attitudes, when attention is concentrated on the objective content to which we take the attitude and not on the attitude itself. When attention is turned inwards, lived experience is objectified and becomes *inner perception*.

STRUCTURE, THE STRUCTURAL SYSTEM. *Die Struktur, Der Strukturzusammenhang.*

The pattern of relations and interactions subsisting between the three types of conscious attitude. (a) The typical differences between the three kinds of attitude and the subordinate divisions under each head (e.g., under cognition the distinctions between sensation, imagination, perception, thought, etc.). (b) The functional relations between the subordinate elements under each head (e.g., the way in which sensation is amplified and interpreted by other activities so that it becomes perception, and this is distilled into abstract thought, and thought and perception work

together to build up a widening realm of knowledge). (c) The functional relations between the three main types of attitude. Cognitive experience gives rise to affective and conative reactions, and all together constitute mental life. In any moment of mental life, taken in its concrete actuality, elements of all three kinds will be found, though one kind or other will be dominant.—All these “structural” relations and processes are “teleological” in the sense that they work to build up and maintain a vital whole. Casual connections such as arise under the laws of association are not “structural”.

MEANING, SIGNIFICANCE, SENSE. *Bedeutung, Bedeutsamkeit, Sinn.*

(a) The “teleological” or vital unity maintained by the structural relations and processes in the life of an individual mind or of a group. Every episode of history, from a small one such as a visit to a cinema to a huge one such as the French Revolution, has a “meaning” in this sense, and this is the prime object of historical study and exposition. The pattern of the whole is its *sense*, the part played in it by each several factor is the *significance* of that factor; *meaning* is a general term covering both *sense* and *significance*. This is the primary usage of all these three words in Dilthey. (b) The relation between a sign or expression and what it signifies or expresses.

EXPLANATION. *Erklärung.*

Accounting for observed facts in terms of factors whose number and nature is determined not by descriptive analysis of the observed facts, but by the requirements of a methodological assumption. E.g., accounting for physical processes in terms of entities not observable and possessing only primary qualities; or accounting for memory in terms of physical traces or “engrams” in the brain. According to Dilthey this mode of procedure is fundamental in the natural sciences, because the real causal factors at work in nature do not fall under sense-perception. But in the human studies the mental facts and their relations and interactions are consciously lived through and perceived just as they are (though not of course in their full extent), and there is no need to seek explanation by going behind them to types of entity and process other than we perceive. The human studies are *descriptive* as against *explanatory* disciplines.

### UNDERSTANDING. *Das Verstehen.*

(a) Apprehending the meaning, in sense (a) above, of a portion of mental life or history, i.e., seeing all its parts and aspects in relation to the vital movement of the whole. This is the primary meaning of the word in Dilthey. (b) Apprehending the meaning, in sense (b) above, of a sign or expression, i.e., understanding (in the foregoing sense) the mental fact or process which it signifies or expresses.—Understanding is always of the individual or the type, not of a general law or principle; and always of something mental, never of anything merely physical.

### RE-LIVING, REPRODUCTION. *Das Nacherleben, Das Nachbilden.*

Re-experiencing in my own consciousness an incident which really belongs to someone else's mental history. This is the process which makes possible the understanding of other persons. The conscious processes in my own mind by means of which I do it are the *Nachbild* of the reality which I thus understand.

### HERMENEUTICS. *Die Hermeneutik.*

The art and science of interpreting (a) written records (b) all fixed and enduring expressions of mind.

### OUTLOOK. *Weltanschauung.*

There is no adequate English equivalent, and I have often used the German word. In Dilthey it means a complex of ideas and sentiments comprising (a) beliefs and convictions about the nature of life and the world, (b) emotional habits and tendencies based on these, and (c) a system of purposes, preferences, and principles governing action and giving life unity and meaning. The *Weltanschauung* of a person or a society includes that person's or society's answer to the fundamental questions of destiny which Dilthey calls the *riddle of life*.

### THE METAPHYSICAL CONSCIOUSNESS. *Das metaphysische Bewusstsein.*

Awareness of the *riddle of life* and of the vast speculative questions which it opens up, and which go beyond all possibility of an answer through empirical investigation. This awareness plays an important part in producing the highest achievements of religion, art, and philosophy. The attempt to answer its questions by severe reasoning in a universally convincing way gives rise to the pseudo-science of *metaphysics*.

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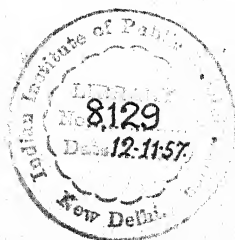
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